

Join the lottery and become rich!

By Itisam Awad
Star Staff Writer

I SPEND five dinars every month and sometimes more, to buy lottery tickets hoping one day I will be the lucky winner," said Abu Murad, a worker in a modest restaurant in Zarqa.

"I have been doing it for the last four years, I've never quit, and now buying lottery cards has turned me into an addict," Murad, who only earns JD 120 per month, added.

"I have many commitments. I have to pay the rent for my apartment, and buy special milk for my two children, and then there are my cigarettes," Murad explained.

Seeking to do what the lottery the quick way to get rich, people become hooked on the game. They call their "dream" of becoming rich. "I used to choose the numbers myself, but after a while I became convinced that I needed a "fortunate touch," said Lana, who works in one of the factories in Amman.

"Nowadays, I let my children choose the numbers, then I pray it would be the winning number." However, up until now, Lana hasn't won any prizes, but she forcefully says that she won't give up.

However, for some people carrying lottery tickets has its own rituals.

"For me the only thing I do when I have tickets is I pray repeatedly, and sometimes I count the cards till I reach the date of my birthday." But this has proved a day-dream for Jamal, who is a university student.

But, suppose you were the lucky guy and you had all the right numbers for the first prize. What would you do? "Maybe I will faint for a long time before I buy a house, a car, a mobile...." Jamal just continued to make demands.

Every two weeks there is a draw for the lottery that is run by one charitable organization in Jordan.

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Popular sectors and government on edge Proposed draft press law triggers tension, spoils short honeymoon

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

LESS THAN three weeks after His Majesty King Hussein's initiative to open a national dialogue between the different popular sectors in the country, the government seems again to be insisting on spoiling the first days of the honeymoon.

Contrary to what happened in terms of narrowing the gap between the state and the professional associations, that brought about a new era of understanding, the government is criticized for once again seeking to draw a new line that is seen by far as the most repressive yet.

Popular sectors, especially members of the press body are dismayed because the government is drawing up the draft without proper consultations and certainly not within the spirit of dialogue that was the case a couple of weeks ago. This is something that was

also underlined when the King met the members of the three branches of state as he stressed the necessity for participation of all parties in drawing up legislations.

The government's insistence on drafting a new press law came five months after the High Court of Justice revoked a previous temporary press law which was passed in May 1996.

The draft law will be completed today, Thursday by the Legal Committee at the Prime Minister's Office.

Cabinet ratified the first initial draft law last Saturday, when Deputy Prime Minister for Service Affairs, Minister of Information, Dr. Abdullah Nsour discussed the draft with officials of the Jordan Press Association (JPA). They in

turn opposed many of its articles.

"During our meeting we expressed reservations over many of the draft articles which lowers the margin of freedoms and gives the director of the Press and Publication Dept., the right to interfere in newspapers," said JPA President Seif Al Sharif.

"In light of these articles there will be no free press," he continues. "The draft strengthens penalties on journalists." Mr. Sharif said even the 1973 press law, drawn up in the martial law era, banned putting journalists in prison, adding "we reject all articles that talk about penalties and we told the Deputy Prime Minister that effect."

The draft press law angered many (see story below). It sparked much criticism from different sectors in the country. Several Lower House deputies, leaders of the Profes-

sional Associations and journalists expressed their bitterness regarding the draft. Popular sectors described it as bringing the country back to the martial law era.

"The draft law goes against the spirit of openness which His Majesty King Hussein started with during his visit to the professional Associations," said Husni Abu Ghaila, who leads the Council of the Professional Associations and is the President of the Engineers Association.

"The available information concerning the draft law suggests that the ceiling of press freedom will be limited as the professional associations are banned from publishing their views regarding public affairs."

The PAs reject any legislation that suppresses the freedom of citizens to express themselves freely as guaranteed by the Constitution. In its emergency meeting on Monday, the Council of Presidents said it had an "around the clock" duty to follow up news on the draft.

Mr. Mahmoud Al Sharif a former minister of information and the architect of the 1993 Press and Publication Law believes that "there is no need for a new law, unless the government wants to curtail the space for freedom that is guaranteed by the 1993 press law." He added that it can deal with all abuses of the freedom of the press.

"If what have been already published in the newspapers about the draft law is true then it would be very damaging to the image of Jordan abroad," He emphasized that "it is a tragedy, because it is Jordan that is going to suffer not the press only," said Mr. Sharif, who is also the Editor-in-Chief of *Ad Dustour*. "If what has been published in the newspapers is true we are having a more repressive law. It is a backward step."

In this respect also, deputies are somewhat dismayed and they expressed their criticism to the draft law in the form that was published in the

King, Saudi Prince stress need for "unified Arab stance"

AMMAN, (Star)—Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz arrived in Amman on a two-day visit for talks with King Hussein on the stalled Arab-Israeli peace process, Arab issues and bilateral relations, Monday.

Prince Abdullah, the highest-ranking Saudi official to visit Jordan in 11 years, arrived from Syria where he held similar talks with President Hafez Assad.

In Damascus, Prince Abdullah warned Israel against "excessive self-confidence and excessive imprudence," and urged Washington to continue backing the peace process.

During their talks the King and the Saudi Crown Prince reiterated their commitment to the Arab-Israeli peace process. On Tuesday, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah ended a 24-hour visit as part of a diplomatic effort to convene an Arab summit.

"Saudi Arabia and Jordan agree on the necessity to respect agreements," signed with Israel "on the basis of international resolutions and the principle of exchanging land for peace," according to a government source.

Jordanian officials said the prince's talks with the Jordanian leadership were focused on the possibility of holding an Arab summit on the deadlocked Middle East peace process.

Jordan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani said Prince Abdullah's visit "comes at a time when Arabs need to unify their ranks" and to discuss "the possibilities of holding an enlarged or mini-summit to help fulfill the Arab nation's aspirations."

The Prince's tour comes amidst a diplomatic Arab activity to convene a summit aimed at forming a united Arab front to confront Israel, which is blamed



Welcoming the guest: King Hussein and Prince Abdullah

for obstructing the Middle East peace process.

Jordanian officials said Amman prefers holding a mini-summit, since an enlarged meeting could become bogged down over the many other complex Arab issues, and prevent a unified position from being achieved.

A joint statement issued after talks between Jordan's King Hussein Prince Abdullah late Monday, said the two sides agreed on the "necessity for careful preparation for an Arab summit if it is convened."

The statement said, "Careful prepara-

tion is needed to ensure Arab solidarity over the obstructed peace process and to avoid splits relating to other issues."

Saudi Ambassador to Jordan Abdullah Sudeiri stressed that the visit of the Crown Prince to Jordan had a special significance at this stage which requires unifying Arab stands on the current developments in the region.

He said that the visit comes within the existing policy of coordination and consultations between the two countries' leadership.

Minister speaks his mind on public sector reform

By Itisam Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

There are shock waves in the public sector at the moment, as employees brace themselves for the worst. With the onset of restructuring in the civil service more and more employees are certain to face redundancies in the very near future.

Officials say that the public sector is "overloaded" with more than 30,000 employees "unnecessary." As from 1 June, the government began trimming down the civil service to reduce expenditure and eliminate what is termed as "admin-

istrative sluggishness," something that is badly reflected on the economy.

The Cabinet has recently approved a resolution to cut the rate of expenditure in the public sector by 10 percent and reduce the number of employees by two percent.

That would actually mean firing about 4000 people from their jobs.

Has this action been taken haphazardly or is it the outcome of a detailed scientific study? No one denies that with between 160,000-200,000 employees in 75 public institu-

tions, the public sector is over-employed costing the state millions of dinars.

Asked about the reasons for this, Minister of Administrative Development Dr Bassam Al Umouh told *The Star* "work opportunities [in the public sector] are offered according to defined schedules and of the needs of each ministry or public institution. However, in light of the economic situation, the government can't expand in creating new job opportunities nor it can totally cancel new vacancies."

According to the Minister, the laying off people will in no way affect productive employees. "Certainly, those who have a bad record will be the ones to go. It also means that the whole process will be implemented according to a well thought out system," confirmed Dr Umouh.

One of the suggestions to curtail additional expenses was to approve a two-day holiday. A recent opinion poll conducted by the Ministry revealed that about 70 percent of employees agree with the idea. "There was also another poll released by the Ministry of Finance, but naturally we don't build decisions on polls," Dr Umouh said. A comprehensive scientific study is the key to come up with a decision that gives consideration to all the dimensions regarding these proposals.

Dr Umouh attributes the current economic situation which requires greater austerity measures, to the nature of Jordan's economy. "Jordan is a country which depends, to a great extent, on external aid, and most of its economic activ-



Al Umouh

ities base their success on the Iraqi market, in terms of promoting output or exchanging commercial ties." Meanwhile Iraq is still suffering from UN sanctions which is blocking free access of Jordanian products to that country.

In addition to this, tough measures imposed by Israel are hindering economic ties with our closest market, the Palestinian National Authority, and this causes further losses for Jordanian manufacturers and exporters.

What also worsens the situation is that Jordan has been the resort for many Palestinians who immigrated from their homeland to the Kingdom in 1948 and 1967. Moreover, the return of about half million expatriates from the Gulf, following the war in 1990 has worsened the situation.

These factors have also helped to increase the average rate of unemployment in the country.

"The minister who is enthu-

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Residents near nuclear test area report health woes

By John Thor Dahlburg
CHACHA, India—When Haji Shamsudeen felt the ground sway under his feet and saw the plates and spoons tumble from the shelf inside his home in this sweltering desert village, he believed the world was coming to an end.

"I ran outside," the farmer and herdsman said, "and prayed to God to be spared."

Two weeks later, two of Shamsudeen's five cows are dead, two-thirds of his flock of 300 goats are sick with diarrhea and getting dangerously thin, and many neighbors here in Chacha, a farming hamlet of 150 families, feel weak and ill. Last week, one man tore off his clothes, began to rant and had to be taken to a mental hospital.

Shamsudeen, bearded patriarch of a household that includes his four sons and their spouses, blames the problems on the same awesome and mysterious power that earlier this month ruptured and emptied his underground water cistern and cracked the red sandstone walls of his house.

"It was the tests," said the 45-year-old resident of this settlement five miles from India's Pokaran range, where five nuclear explosions were set off 11 May 11. "It is the tests that have driven up the temperatures so much that my cows weren't able to stand it."

India's decision to stage its first nuclear tests since 1974 has pushed neighboring Pakistan to test a bomb of its own and may serve as the impetus for a nuclear arms race on the subcontinent.

But here, in the scrub-dotted Thar Desert of western India, where temperatures have recently reached a near-record 118 degrees, people fear the blasts have been the cause of more immediate and personal woes.

"After the 11th, my nose has started bleeding three or four times," said Multana Ram, 60, a farmer of mustard and millet whose sun-blasted village of Khetolai is less than two miles from the test site. "My knees ache—I can't bend my legs." His wife, Ram said, has had bouts of fever over the past two weeks.

A doctor who visited Khetolai after the tests told Ram his problems were caused by the intense summer heat. The mustachioed man, whose paunch is a sign of prosperity in this impoverished region, thinks he knows better.

"It is the heat and the gas generated by the explosion that are causing this," Multana Ram said. The farmer remembers a dark brown cloud rising into the air and dust blowing into Khetolai for two hours on May 11, the day of the first tests.

Indian authorities, both in New Delhi and in this remote and sparsely populated district 70 miles from the India-Pakistan border, insist that the explosions, which were carried out underground, pose absolutely no health risk. And the scorching temperatures are not confined to the area around the test site.

As for property damage—people in Khetolai claim that 196 of their 262 stone-built homes were damaged by the shock waves—Shanker Lal Sharma, the region's highest-ranking government official, said he believes it may be an exaggeration to secure government aid. "If I had a crack in my

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05.07.1998

Veterinary clinic doubles as education center

By Karen Driscoll
Special to The Star

WALKING AROUND in the metropolitan region I've noticed goats' ears which have been half cut off they were "too long" the shepherd boy told me, sheep with filthy undersides and tails, bleeding sores on donkeys' legs, and emaciated horses pulling simple ploughs over rocky land by the highway, but I'd never imagined the extent to which rural Jordanians use and depend on animals for their livelihoods, nor the extent to which the animals often suffer.

The Jordanian Society for the Protection of Animals (JSPA) was formed in 1988 under the auspices of London's Society for the Protection of Animals Ahrold, whose origins go back to 1923 with the creation of the Society for the Protection of Animals in North Africa (SPANNA). JSPA has two animal clinics, one in Wadi Al Sir and another in Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley, with a total of 15 hand-working, dedicated employees. I recently visited the Wadi Al Sir clinic with a group of students from the Amman Baccalaureate School.

As we climbed down from our bus, a team of vets from JSPA's Mobile Unit were on their way to farms and encampments in the region to tend animals in need.

While the students carried out a number of well-organized tasks in animal care such as washing dogs, preparing home-made dog food, cutting up carrots for the horses and donkeys, translating brochures from Arabic into English, and painting cages with bright colors, I followed JSPA Vice President Margaret Ledger, Nadia Hamam, JSPA's Education Program's teacher, as well as a vet and his assistant around as they multi-tasked in the moderately-sized clinic.

The first patient we met was a stray dog which some people had cruelly amused themselves with by covering with fresh cement. The vets removed as much

of the concrete as possible, but a great deal will have to be cut off as the hair grows back over the raw, irritated skin.

One of the vets brought me around to the horse and donkey stalls. He told me that they lost a donkey yesterday, after tending it for over 10 hours. Even intravenous fluids could not save the creature from death by apparent overwork and dehydration.

Several donkeys are presently at the clinic recovering from serious wounds and sores—some wriggling with maggots—and intestinal problems.

A farmer brought his blind mule to the clinic in order to have it put down since it had become "useless." The vets applied eye medicine and antibiotics in an attempt to save the creature's sight. I asked a vet the donkey's age. He looked at its teeth: around 16 years old. Donkeys can potentially live up to the age of 40.

A man phoned the clinic asking for some ointment for his horse's tail. He was told to bring the animal in. The horse's tail was in an extreme state of infection. A vet told me his team spent three hours ridding the tail of great peels of hair matted with manure, soil, and maggots.

The problems are not always exclusively medical ones. Occasionally the clinic runs into some unusual situations. Ledger told us about a horse that had fallen into a well. The owners could not get it out for three days. But the clinic rescued it.

At that moment, a grateful farmer came in a truck to pick up his horse which had been chewing strangely. The vets found that the horse had developed sores in its mouth from eating barley. The problem was that the animal's teeth needed rasping and it couldn't chew properly.

"Not all people who use the clinic have abused their animals. That gentleman, for example, he noticed that something was wrong and brought his animal here right away. Many people spot sores on their animals' hocks, but are put off seeking

medical advice because they need their animals on a daily basis to plough, haul water, or for transportation. Before long, the festering sores, caused by chaffing and poor saddles which slip and slide, become severely ulcerated."

Many people depend on their animals to make a living for their large families.

JSPA has a Swap Program, whereby a recuperating work animal is temporarily replaced with one of the clinic's healthy animals.

JSPA has an arrangement with the Jordanian Ministry of Education. Nadia Hamam, who works at the clinic as well as lectures in 40 government schools in villages up and down the valley, strives to teach children how to be humane to animals. A touching blow-up of a photograph shows a village school class of 30 children posing with a dog. "The first dog most of them had ever petted," said Ledger.

"Kids need to learn not to cut the ears and tails of stray dogs and cats, and not to throw stones at them," she said.

The irony was that outside the gate of the clinic, at that very moment, were four village boys who were taunting some of the dogs inside, one of the boys waving a stick threateningly and getting a thrill when one of the canines barked back and showed its fangs.

"Forty schools is only a drop of water in the ocean when you think of the 3,000 government schools here in Jordan," Ledger noted.

JSPA is not funded in Jordan, although some pharmaceuticals are donated. "It is a new page in the history of JSPA," said Ledger. "We are starting a new campaign in order to become better known within the country. We encourage charity activities which not only will raise money but will spread awareness about the humane treatment of animals."

The clinic desperately needs gas anesthesia equipment, drips for curing dehydration, x-ray equipment, and an electrocardiograph machine. It also needs to



floor and tile its operating theater.

"A private citizen graciously held a quiz night at his home recently, and raised JD 1200. We would love to see school-related fun-raising activities which would include many participants and be fun," Ledger continued.

The JSPA has many affiliations here in Jordan. Ledger is involved with the Hussein Clinic, where disabled children are meeting JSPA's animal friends. JSPA also has an Adoption Program. We saw a donkey—originally brought to the Wadi Sir clinic with a serious case of mange—and her newborn daughter.

We watched a vet trim the back hooves of a horse. He and the veterinary assistant are in charge of training courses in

saddle-making and farriery (horse-shoeing), with a view to providing a means of education and livelihood to unemployed Jordanians.

JSPA's cooperation with the International League for Protection of Horses, the World Farriery Association, and Working Together for Equines led to the founding of the Jordanian Farriers' Association in 1996.

"Farriery is a dying art in Jordan," said Ledger. "You wouldn't believe how people shoe their animals with rubber tires, with cement reinforcing rods—anything they can find—and with the incorrect nails... these animals are in constant pain. People think that animals don't feel, but you can see the anguish in their eyes."

For the Record

Prince Hassan chairs meeting on Higher Education

Ramtha (Petra)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday underscored the need to invest in human capital in the framework of new ideas that can be implemented and are based on a comprehensive perspective. Prince Hassan, who was speaking at a meeting he presided over at the Jordanian University of Science and Technology (JUST) and devoted to discuss future policy of higher education in Jordan said human dignity should be the objective of development which should thrive in a comprehensive outlook based on dialogue, integration and a scientific and practical research. The meeting is the first of four meetings designed to provide higher education development plan with information on the needs of the higher education sector through the participation of all parties involved in higher education institutions.

Representatives of the public and private universities and other educationalists will be taking part in these meetings. The Crown Prince stressed the need for harmony between the input and output of higher education and to bridge the gap between higher education for the society's requirements. His Highness called for making use of the available opportunities of foreign financing for education activities in the country pointing to the European plans to support industrial education and teacher qualification programs. Prince Hassan also pointed to the Canadian program to develop vocational education and the World Bank's willingness to fund overall education reform process. The Crown Prince called for establishing a center for policies dialogue and the resumption of national dialogue geared to reach a consensus on policies based on accurate and objective information.

Jordan Membership

Vienna (Petra)—The Permanent Council of the Vienna-based Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe approved Jordan's membership in the organization in response to its request to join the organization. Jordan's ambassador to Austria and its permanent representative to the UN, Dr. Mazen Arzouqi made intensive contacts with the organization and ambassadors of its member countries to guarantee their support to the Jordanian request to join the organization. The new membership will provide Jordan with an opportunity to improve its image and position especially in fields relating to security and cooperation.

Jordan will also have the right to take part in special missions to regions where conflicts prevail, elections monitoring as well as dialogues that aim at enhancing European-Mediterranean cooperation.

Justice Minister visit

Amman (Petra)—Minister of Justice Riyad Shaka'a began a several-day official visit to areas of the Palestinian National Authority to hold talks with Palestinian officials on judicial cooperation between Jordan and the PNA. During his visit, which comes in response to an invitation from the Palestinian Justice Minister, Mr. Shaka'a will also discuss ways of providing support and consultation to the Palestinian side in the various judicial fields.

Majali, Abdel-Rahim meeting

Gaza (Petra)—Jordan's representative at the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Ziyad Majali conferred on Sunday with PNA Secretary-General Tayyeb Abdel Rahim on latest efforts exerted to end the stalemate in the peace process caused by the Israeli intransigent policies. Voice of Palestine Radio said the Jordanian and Palestinian officials exchanged views on the results of the American parliamentary delegation's tour in the region in addition to issues of common interest.

Minister speaks his mind on public sector reform

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plastic about leading a new era of change, said that the Ministry of Administrative Development is a youthful one, established in 1994, and in its present form can only offer administrative consultation for ministries and government institutions.

But if authorized to carry out

more activity such as supervising the performance of these institutions, it will then have a more vital and beneficial role.

The Minister is concerned about the issue of unemployment and is currently working on a proposal to hold a national conference to tackle this issue.

Official statistics put the average rate of unemployment at 14.4 percent, but other

sources, such as the Strategic Studies Center, estimate the figure at 24 percent or more.

"Regardless of the real figure, official or unofficial, the 14.4 percent is not small, so we admit that there is a problem," Dr. Umouh explained.

But Jordan is not the only country which suffers from this problem; it is a global one. "As for Jordan, this is the problem

which affects every house, and that is why we wish to organize the conference and all parties, associations, professional unions, parliament, ministries, academics, journalists, economic experts, lawyers, vocational training institutions and centers, can participate.

The three-day conference, which will convene on 17 August, will be a golden opportunity for the private sector to participate in the open dialogue to solve this problem which continues to threaten the economy in Jordan.

Based upon much scientific study, the 11 working papers for discussion hope to achieve tangible results.

The Ministry advises that after the paper is presented, those parties wishing to comment should provide alternative answers to those currently on the table. This will enhance constructive dialogue during the conference.

"One paper is expected to tackle the issue of unemployment from a different angle, asking if it is really a combination of a lack of vacancies and the economic situation, or is it purely because of what is termed as 'a shame culture,'" said Dr. Umouh. If it is because of a shame culture—meaning that Jordanian won't shun certain jobs because of what they regard as menial—let any participant suggest ways of eliminating such concepts and speak about his experience in this regard.

The Minister pointed out that "We depend to a large extent on the participation of the private sector."

Having a total of about 25,000 privately-owned establishments, the Minister suggests that if every company volunteers to offer at least one vacancy, then 25,000 new job opportunities could be created. This idea itself would be a great achievement.

Popular sectors and government on edge

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press. "Despite His Majesty's insistence on the necessity for discussing the draft law with the concerned parties before presenting it to Parliament, the government have not discussed it with the deputies concerned," said Nayef Mola who heads the Lower House National Guidance Committee which will examine the draft law before presenting it to the Lower House.

Despite his refusal to comment on press reports regarding the anxieties of the draft, he criticized what he termed as the secret methods in which the government dealt with an important issue like the draft law, said Mola. A former head of the Press and Publication Dept.

And Lower House deputy Abdel Karim Al Doghmi, a former minister of justice believes that there is no need for a new press law since the current law [of 1993] is balanced, modern and satisfies all

the professional and democratic needs.

Political parties and human rights organizations also voiced deep concern on the democratic process if the published draft law become a status quo and not ratified by the Parliament.

Continued from page 1

house," Sharma said. "I could blame it on the explosion, too." M.C. Vyas, the chief physician at Pokaran's government hospital, spent seven days touring villages around the test site soon after the explosions but said he found nothing drastically different. Classic symptoms of radiation sickness from lesser exposure include nausea and vomiting immediately after the exposure followed about two or three weeks later by infections and pinpoint spots of bleeding under the skin.

Since May 11, local teacher Surey Karan Purohit has tabulated reports of up to 100 people taken ill in Chachia, Khetolai, Lathi and three other villages near the Pokaran range. Other people agree that there has been a surge in health problems even if they hesitate in pinning the blame on the nuclear blast.

"Seventy-five percent of the people here have been affected, but it's not consistent," said Hari Ram, 22, whose diploma as a school physical education instructor makes him one of Khetolai's best-educated residents. On the porch of the village's dairy cooperative, Ladhu Ram, 60, resident in a floppy white turban, was sitting with some of his neighbors as the milk taken from local cows was analyzed in glass tubes. "I am short of breath, my eyes are watering, and my hands itch—I can't sleep at night," he said. Like many other people in this part of Rajasthan, India's hottest and most arid state, Ladhu Ram laughed at the explanation from government officials that his symptoms were caused by the weather. "This bomb they set off—this was not a holiday firecracker,"

he pointed out. The nuclear tests were enormously popular with the Indian public, but in the villages closest to the blast site, the explosions are more likely to be cited as a cause of misfortune. "They say these tests are right for the country," Shamsudeen said as he showed the cracked walls of his house to visitors. "But we people who live here have to put up with all these things. It's not right for us."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Issue of refugees get a look-in

AMMAN, (Petra)—American and Palestinian officials concerned with refugees' problems highly appreciated on Sunday Jordan's role in supporting Palestinian refugees and providing them with necessary relief and care services.

Ms Marguerite R. Houze, Deputy Assistant Secretary from the US State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and Dr. As'ad Abdel Rahman, member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)'s Executive Committee in charge of refugees' file, affirmed that the Jordanian leadership's concern with Palestinian refugees "has moved this issue from the sphere of money and numbers to that of regarding the refugee as a human being with needs and rights."

The two officials highlighted

the necessity of concerting international efforts to bear the responsibility for Palestinian refugees so that the burden and complications of this problem are not only shouldered by a limited number of countries.

Ms Houze, who headed the American delegation to the meeting of UNRWA Major Host and Donor Countries in Amman, said Jordan is an important voice in any discussion pertaining to UNRWA, and its views should be listened to carefully because it is host to the largest number of Palestinian refugees in the region.

The American official stated that the US government's support of the UNRWA is solid and unwavering. The US announced last week an additional \$7 million contribution to UNRWA, bringing the total

American contribution to UNRWA's 1998 Regular Program Budget to a record \$77 million. It is hoped that the US action will encourage other donors to fulfill their obligations and increase their contributions to the UNRWA.

On his part, Dr. Abdel Rahman said the PLO strongly supports Jordan's plan to improve the living conditions of the refugees within the context of social security package program, especially as Jordanian officials, headed by His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan, repeatedly stated their firm position against settling refugees in Jordan. Dr. Abdel Rahman said the PLO welcomes any Arab effort to improve living conditions in Palestinian refugee camps.

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Residents near nuclear test area report health woes

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LA Times-Washington Post News Service

For the Record

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Press Court

A new press court. A strange but novel idea one may first think, yet it is being actively considered among judicial circles. Taher Hikmat of the Higher Judicial Council said that in the very near future there would be the setting up of a court that deals exclusively with press and publications. Hikmat, who also heads the Censorship Court, says that he believes that the solutions to the problems of the press lies within the press body itself, adding that journalists should exercise greater self-discipline. He pointed out that "he hoped that the journalist wouldn't be transferred to the courts except in cases in which it is deserved."



Taher Hikmat

Parliamentary session

The extraordinary session of the Lower House of Parliament is to start on 6 June after a Royal Decree was issued this week. Observers say that this parliamentary session is likely to be a hot one simply because of the draft laws, most important of which is the one concerning press and publications.

Municipalities

In debt. A recent study showed that most of the municipal and rural affairs' councils are in debt, and badly in need of restructuring. The study which is carried out by the Local Councils Committee suggests that the best way to improve the public services provided to people through out the Kingdom is to merge the local councils into no more than 50 municipalities. This is an issue that is on the agenda of the Ministry of Municipalities and Rural Affairs. The study found some other interesting facts. The percentage of employees who have a university degree is no more than five percent, those who have a diploma is nine percent, but a massive 86 percent for those who have an education below a Secondary School Certificate.

Telephones

It seems that there is going to be great changes at the Jordan Telecommunication Co. (JTC). For one thing it is going to start providing a telephone mobile service. According to JTC Chairman Walid Al Duweik, this is definite, but he did not specify why. However the excitement should reach over the top for people who have no telephones. Again, and according to Mr Duweik, there will be more than one million telephone lines by the end of the year.

Poverty

The ceiling allowance of poor families is to increase to JD 80 per month, according to the Minister of Social Development Mohammad Khair Mamsar. He said that there won't be any changes concerning the low interest loans which the Ministry gives to those who want to start productive and investment projects. These free-interest loans are paid during a 10-year period.

Taxis

The Ministry of Interior is to give licenses to 20 more taxi firms within the next two months according to what is regarded as a new system of operations. First of all licences will only be given to firms who have more than a fixed number of taxis. For instance, in Amman, new firms must have at least 70 taxis registered on their books, for Zerqa and Irbid, the number of taxis goes down to 50, while in the rest of the governorates, only those firms with 25 cars would be given a license to operate. Furthermore the cars must be of the latest models. What is new also is that all cars would be equipped with a radio system, to facilitate communications between the driver and the firm. The purpose of this is to increase the workload. In addition to that only drivers who are above 25 years-old will be given license. However, the age limit is 60.

Melons

The wonders of Melons. The Jordanian truck loads of melons that were waiting on the border to go into Lebanon have been turned back, after more than two weeks. Three refrigerated trucks were not allowed entry into Lebanon because it was argued that they were violating the Jordan-Lebanese Trade Protocol. Officials at the Agricultural Marketing Corp are trying to playdown the incident and have since said that the melons are in a good condition and are being sold at the local market. They pointed out that press reports that 50 percent of the melons have been spoilt was simply not true.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan inspects the units of the Royal Special Forces, Tuesday. On arrival, he was met by His Royal Highness Prince Abdallah, who is the commander of the Special Forces.

GAM

A cultural edifice in downtown Amman

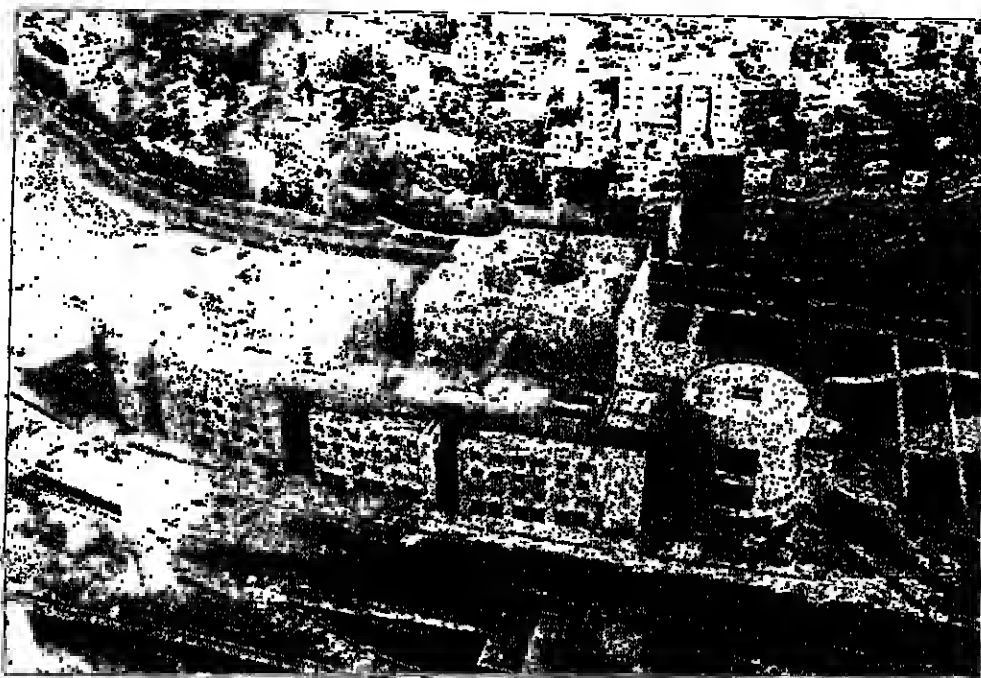
By Ibtisam Awadat
Special to The Star

AMMAN IS divided into two parts, east and west. The western part means rich neighborhoods, grand villas, wide and clean streets as well as different cultural centers. In the eastern side of the capital the situation is a lot different. There are poor districts, unorganized buildings crowded streets, and nowhere to spend your free time.

However the eastern side of the city is rich with ancient culture. The downtown for example is enriched with relics of the past like the Roman Theater, the great Al Hussein Mosque, and the Ras Al Ein area.

Since 1995, the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) has set upon developing the neglected spaces. "We want to bring life back to these areas," said GAM's Mayor Dr Mamdooh Al Abadi, during a tour for journalists to the different parts of Ras Al Ein project which is spaced out on 140 dunams.

The executed parts of the plan had been inaugurated by His Majesty King Hussein.



they include: The City Hall building which was opened to the public in November 1996 on the occasion of His Majesty's birthday. The design of the building reflects the architectural

heritage of the area. The richly decorated JD 3 million hall has different galleries and also houses the administrative section of GAM that is surrounded by huge palm trees.

But connected to the City Hall by a bridge is another great edifice, a large building for the rest of the employees of the Greater Amman Municipality. It costs JD 6 million.

The construction of the GAM complex in Ras Al Ein has greatly contributed to the cultural rejuvenation of east Amman. Above all, it has provided an opportunity for the people to spend their time

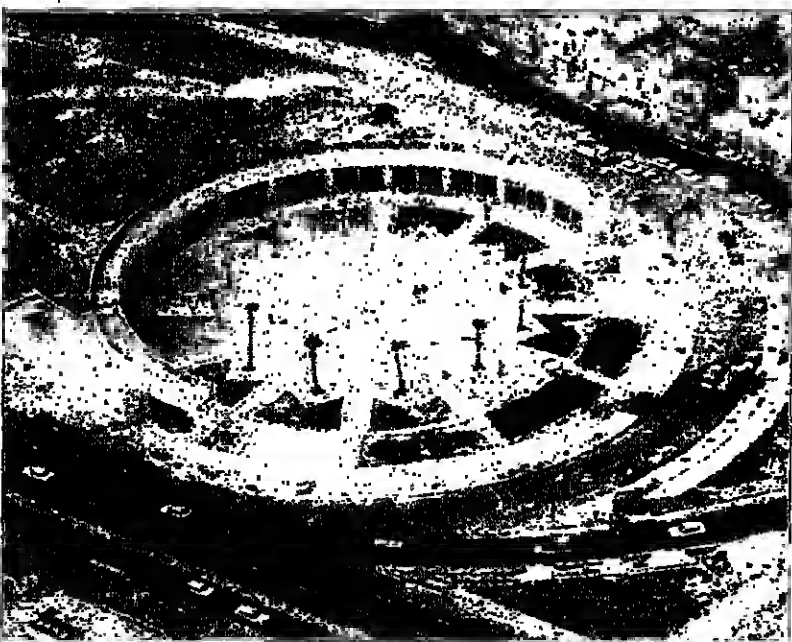
in what is called the "Fountains Yard," in that it includes 19 water fountains amidst wide green areas.

"We have tried to keep to the identity of the area, since Ras Al Ein (source of water in Arabic) was a well-known and a rich place for the supply of water," Dr Abadi added.

During the celebration of the 52 anniversary of Independence Day, King Hussein laid the cornerstone to the up and coming parts of the project. A mosque, named Al Noorayn and designed according to Islamic architecture, will be built and will have a capacity for 2000 people.

This will be coupled with building the Ras Al Ein Cultural Center that will provide cultural and educational services. Such a center will have a public library, galleries, a large auditorium in addition to the other services which include bookshops, and a car park.

Finally, a national museum will be established to display antiquities of the Kingdom.



'A Cry for Nature'

Campaign to save environment

By Star Staff Writer

JORDAN FACES many ecological problems. Experts and concerned people are busily searching for solutions to attempt to prevent the deterioration of the environment in Jordan.

Titled "A Cry for Nature" a campaign was launched last Saturday under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor. This environmental campaign is organized by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), and will last till the end of 1998.

"Because of its location between three continents, Jordan has a variety of habitats," said Anis Moasher president of the RSCN, the first non-governmental organization of its kind to be established in the region, in 1966.

"In the last 100 years, we lost different species in Jordan, and we certainly could lose more unless we do something,"

said Mr Moasher.

Studies carried out by the RSCN show that more than 20 different kinds of animals have become extinct. These include the Arabian Leopard, the Syrian Brown Bear and the Blue-Necked Ostrich. If action is not taken quickly many others could face a similar fate. Also exotic plants have disappeared as 10 million hectares of fertile land have been turned into arid deserts or forests of cement, similar to what happened in Shmeisani and Abdoun. In addition, most of the rivers have become either polluted or dried up because of illegal uses.

"Our region contains rare species of plants, that's why 40 years ago, experts came back to this area looking for a solution when the wheat crops were affected by a strange disease."

"I believe that without nature, mankind will have no future. That is why we have to increase public awareness of

nature," said Mr Chos Johnson, RSCN director of conservation. "Increase in population of Jordan (estimated to be 4.5 percent in the last 15 years) is considered to be one of the highest in the world," Johnson emphasized the necessity for searching for more resources to protect the ecosystems in Jordan.

"Regardless of all the familiar benefits of animals and plants, 25 percent of our medicine is derived from plants which reflect the urgent need for a loud cry for help," Johnson explained.

A Cry for Nature is a call for everyone. It is a mutual responsibility between the public and private sectors, organizations and individuals.

"It is a team effort, and a joint strategy in which the whole society participates in," Johnson concluded.

greater understanding of the environment.

"The society is currently responsible for six major reserves covering over 1000 square kilometers," said Dr Khalid Irani, director general of the RSCN.

Breeding endangered species to save them from extinction is one of the objectives of the RSCN. Meanwhile, the society has been able to raise the Arabian Oryx, Gazelle, Ibex and other species.

"That doesn't mean we have no concerns for our Jordanian citizens in the protected areas," Mr Irani continued. "Our goal is to reach a balance between the needs of wildlife and the needs of people through the development of large-scale conservation programs." Mr Irani pointed out that the purpose of such programs is to integrate environmental protection with the socio-economic development of society.



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Lurie's NewsCartoon



Our Say...

Sending an Arab message to Israel

AMMAN HAS been the center of intense diplomatic activity this week aimed at preparing the ground for the holding of an emergency Arab summit to deal with the current stalemate in the Middle East peace process. The visit by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdel Aziz to Jordan and his talks with His Majesty King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan, along with his meeting with visiting US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering, underscore the importance of efforts being exerted to formulate a united Arab stand to face Israeli intransigence.

There is an agreement among Arab states that holding an Arab summit has become a necessity as the region faces the threat of a political upheaval triggered by Israel's refusal to honor its obligations and commitments. The Middle East peace process, which has been pinned down for the last 15 months, appears to have reached a point of total collapse. US efforts to mediate between the Palestinians and the Israelis have failed to bear fruits, although the Palestinians have accepted the latest American proposals.

The stalemate is already creating a sense of frustration and despair in the region which in effect promises to lead to confrontations and violence in the Occupied Territories. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's defiant policies are pushing the entire region on to a road that will lead to violence and chaos. His policies appear to aim at deconstructing the peace process and catapulting the region into a cycle of violence and counter-violence.

In the face of such threats, the Arab world, which took the historic decision of supporting the Arab-Israeli peace process on the basis of the exchange of land for peace, must now give its response to Israel's irresponsible policies and draw up a new strategy. The summit should also prove that a united Arab front exists—this is the message that both Washington and Tel Aviv must receive.

Disagreements over summit agenda and structure must not hamper efforts to convene the summit. This is why we welcome Jordan's announcements that it is ready to attend the Arab summit.

The US, which has a special responsibility, must make its position clear. There is every reason to believe that Washington is working closely to save what could be termed as the last chance for the peace process. In that regard, the Arabs will be watching carefully what Washington does over the coming few days.

Israel, under Netanyahu, has made a dangerous reversal in its position and has reneged on its promises and agreements. Such actions must not be allowed to succeed without a price. The Israelis must be made to understand that they stand to lose too, if the peace process collapses.



PNA President Arafat and Jordanian Minister of Justice Riad Al Shaka' in Gaza, Tuesday. The high point of discussion was the peace process.

A misplaced faith in Nuclear deterrence

By Kenneth J. Cooper and John Ward Anderson

AS THEY engage in a second Cold War, India and Pakistan have been guided by an optimistic reading of the hygroic Cold War's history that assumes mutual possession of nuclear weaponry automatically prevents nuclear war, just as it ultimately did during four decades of confrontation between the United States and former Soviet Union.

While placing faith in the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence, leaders of the two hostile neighbors on the Indian subcontinent also expect to avoid other, damaging side effects of the US-Soviet conflict, such as the spiraling costs and escalating tensions resulting from an arms race to establish a strategic edge.

India and Pakistan, for the most part bystanders to the Cold War, also have underestimated the impact that nationalist passions and fears of being obliterated, once unleashed, can have in a nuclearized rivalry. Rather than risks, the nations mostly see national security in nuclear arms.

These shared perspectives are based partly on an understanding that two of the world's poorest nations cannot easily afford to spend billions of dollars on nuclear weapons and expensive military systems to deliver them.

In the case of India, the attitude is also based on a one-sided view of the developing nation as "dedicated to peace," in the words of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, even though modern India has the world's fourth-largest military and has often bullied its smaller neighbors.

"They say they won't go through the same (kind of) Cold War, but they are human and they've made strategic mistakes in the past," said Stephen P. Cohen, a South Asia specialist who teaches at the University of Illinois. "They are no worse than us, but no better, and the stakes are very high."

Scott Sagan, a political scientist at Stanford University, said: "They are taking only the positive aspects of the past experience and saying they'll copy that, and they're assuming they'll avoid the negative aspects. There's no reason only the good news of the past will repeat itself."

In particular, Sagan warned that avoiding nuclear war cannot be taken for granted. "It's like walking on thin ice. The fact that the United States and Soviets did it once during the Cold War should not give anyone confidence that it can be done again."

India and Pakistan have managed to leave themselves a couple of plausible ways out of a second Cold War.

Vajpayee's government has dropped hints that India might be willing to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, or make a similar international agreement, if the rest of the world recognizes the nation as a declared nuclear power.

Pakistan would sign the test-ban treaty almost immediately if India did likewise, according to Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan. India and Pakistan said they were willing to resume bilateral negotiations that stalled last year over the divided Himalayan territory of Kashmir, which both nations claim as their own. The talks could resume in mid-July, when Vajpayee and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif are scheduled to attend a meeting of South Asian leaders in Sri Lanka.

In addition, leaders of Western industrialized nations plan to meet soon to develop an initiative to avert a nuclear-arms race in South Asia.

But the international and regional efforts come too late to stop the escalation. India and Pakistan have engaged in an arms race since 1974, when India conducted its first nuclear test.

Lurie's NewsCartoon



The intensified competition that this month led both nations to openly cross the nuclear threshold began in 1995, when the Indian government, led by the Congress Party, prepared for an underground nuclear test with an election approaching and scuttled its plans in the face of US pressure.

In their recent vows not to repeat the worst of the Cold War, the governments of India and Pakistan have ignored their previous competition to develop nuclear arms and missile systems to deliver them.

"India shall not engage in an arms race. India shall also not subscribe (to) or reinvent the doctrines of the Cold War," Vajpayee's government declared last week in a statement to Parliament.

"The answer for us lies in nuclear deterrence," Shantosh Ahmad, Pakistan's top career diplomat, said after the nation's second round of nuclear tests. "It is not our purpose to enter into an arms race. The history of the Cold War showed that such disastrous races are counterproductive and definitely not sustainable."

Ghaffar Ahmad, deputy leader of a fundamentalist Islamic party in Pakistan, said in an interview, "I don't think there is any danger of nuclear war because nuclear weapons are a deterrent to war."

Ghaffar Ahmad is among opinion-makers in both countries who view nuclear weapons as peacekeepers, even on a tense subcontinent where communal passions have been known periodically to race out of control.

"It keeps peace," Bharat Karnad, an Indian analyst, said recently on a television talk show.

After India conducted underground nuclear tests in May, government officials said they expected Pakistan to do likewise. But as more than two weeks passed, members of Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party began crowing that maybe the Islamic Republic of Pakistan could not muster the necessary technology or would be bought off by a generous aid package from the Clinton administration.

With Pakistan's first detonation of nuclear devices Thursday, followed by another, the mood changed in New Delhi, the capital of the world's second-most-populous country.

Jubilant disappeared among members of India's educated elite who had cheered its nuclear tests of 11 May and 13 May as

a bold expression of national pride. One Western diplomat reported that few had replaced glee in the eyes of Indian cowboys.

Opposition members of Parliament, previously hesitant to criticize a politically popular move, are now accusing Vajpayee's government of precipitating an ominous arms race that it had promised to avoid.

Before last Thursday, Indian officials had at times appeared to underestimate the risks of unintentional nuclear conflict, a scenario that had prompted the United States and the former Soviet Union to install elaborate systems of command and control over their nuclear arsenals.

Jaswant Singh, a member of a task force drafting plans for a national security council that is to develop India's nuclear doctrine, had dismissed a foreign reporter's questions about a specialized command and control structure as "a matter of detail."

"We are not replicating the experience of the West," Singh explained during a news conference at the Foreign Correspondents' Club in New Delhi. "Therefore, what the West understood in the management of their arsenals is not what India requires."

"The word 'arsenal' is inapplicable." Despite such denials, nationalist passions already have contributed to shaping the nuclear-arms race between India and Pakistan.

Prime Minister Sharif ordered Pakistan's tests despite knowing that the full force of economic sanctions could drive his country into bankruptcy. A group of Pakistani newspaper editors the convicted and imprisoned, acknowledged the economic collapse of the former Soviet Union as a relevant lesson of the Cold War but nonetheless voted overwhelmingly for the government to proceed with tests.

Reacting to Pakistan's response to India's tests, Bal Thackeray, who leads a Hindu nationalist partner in the 14-party coalition government, urged India to produce a devastatingly powerful type of nuclear weapon—hydrogen bombs.

Cooper reported from New Delhi, Anderson from Islamabad, Pakistan. ■

LA Times-washington Post News Service

After India's tests, and now Pakistan's

By Teresita C. Schaffer and Howard B. Schaffer

WASHINGTON—With its much-anticipated nuclear tests Thursday and Saturday, Pakistan now joins India in the international nuclear doghouse. This is a dangerous development, not because it reveals new capabilities or changes the Indo-Pakistani power relationship. It does neither.

The fallout the region now faces is political. India and Pakistan were accustomed to a certain level of verbal saber-rattling and "controlled tension" across the line separating their forces in Kashmir. With the bombs out of the basement, both governments now are straining to prove that the tests have improved their security. Ironically, they will have a hard time making that case.

Meanwhile, Indian Home Minister L. K. Advani's heavy-handed mid-May warning to Pakistan about Kashmir, Pakistan's involvement in the Kashmir insurgency and both countries' missile programs carry heavier messages than they did last month—and present far greater risks to the peace of the area.

The US government has applied the sanctions its law requires. Two other issues now need to take center stage: reducing the risk of accidental war in South Asia and con-

straining India and Pakistan against further proliferation.

India and Pakistan both intend to manage their bilateral differences without war. However, military exercises have led to miscalculations on both sides. The resulting crises came uncomfortably close to spiraling out of control. Following the 1990 crisis, India and Pakistan took bilateral measures to discourage a recurrence.

With fresh problems on the Indo-Pakistani scene, the safeguards of 1990 atrophied. It is time to try again. The United States has extensive experience with both nuclear and conventional risk reduction. It should engage in a serious dialogue with India and Pakistan on how, precisely, they can prevent misunderstandings with catastrophic consequences. This dialogue should include advice on how we have been able to communicate about nuclear issues as well as how military forces can avoid accidental conflict. Notification of exercises, management of military flights, organization and orientation of military exercises, regular use of hot lines—there is a long list from which the countries can draw. Russian participation in this effort would make it stronger and more realistic.

China needs to change its traditional detached attitude to-

ward South Asian security issues. It is part of the problem and needs to become part of the solution. Since the 1990 crisis, China has signed both the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. A Sino-Indian dialogue to parallel the one between India and Pakistan—again, both nuclear and conventional—would strengthen the security of the region. It also might help India to accept constraints on its nuclear and missile programs.

China is also uniquely placed to persuade Pakistan to do its part for a workable South Asian risk-reduction arrangement.

On the nonproliferation front, the key is to deter nuclear and missile "leakage" from India and Pakistan. The tests cannot be undone. India and Pakistan now need to act as if they were members of the full range of nonproliferation agreements. The United States should seek their undertaking not to export sensitive nuclear materials, to cap the production of new fissile material and not to test further. We should seek similar undertakings with respect to missiles. India's statements on these subjects have been ambiguous thus far. Beyond written commitments, the United States must make clear that honoring them is critical. The primary concern is with behavior, not with promises. Russia,

China and Japan should join this effort; other interested countries should support it.

These short-term measures would make the region and the world measurably safer than they are now. To make these security gains endure, the United States should encourage India and Pakistan to address the fundamental issues of regional security, including Kashmir, that have roiled Indo-Pakistani relations for the past half-century.

The longer-term future of the nonproliferation system is tougher. Policymakers may have to choose between an unchanged nonproliferation regime and an inclusive one. Constraining existing nuclear programs against further leakage will make the world safer.

If the price of accomplishing this is to create some new version of membership in the "club" for India and perhaps Pakistan, after promising them with several years of binding sanctions, it's a price worth paying.

The writers are retired U.S. ambassadors with extensive service in South Asia. Howard Schaffer is director of studies at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy. ■

LA Times-washington Post News Service

Asian nukes

AMONG THE great celebrations first in India and then in Pakistan, the nuclear arms race in the Asian sub-continent has started in earnest. Both sides declared that it is self-defence which prompted their nuclear experiments. India being threatened by its large neighbor China, and Pakistan reacting to the Indian nuclear capability.

The issue has become a matter of national pride in both countries, and beyond. Sides have been taken, with those seeing the Pakistan nuclear capability as an Islamic capability, while adherents to the theory of Third World power, hailed it as an Asian-Third World nuclear victory. This is also just like the recent past; the Socialist Camp then talked about the workers bomb, while the West saw their bomb as protecting the free world.

At the time, there was no consideration of the fact that the workers bomb does not fall according to class distinctions and alliances, and the free world bomb does not discriminate between oppressor and oppressed. Just as now, there is no discrimination, power for the effects of Asian nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, we seem to miss, our pride in achievements as a rule. The children of underdevelopment, have not realized yet that their strength will not be enhanced by imitating the destructive methods of the developed world, but perhaps lie in adopting some of the humanitarian aspects that have evolved over the years in the lands of plenty.

Perhaps, it would have been far more profitable if India or Pakistan have spent much of the resources that have gone for nuclear research, on the more urgent and peaceful ways of harnessing nuclear power for national needs—agriculture, medical, agricultural, and power generating. The developed world is moving away from the use of nuclear energy, fearing the negative aspects of nuclear powered plants. However, if it's a question of pride, then it should be pride in fulfilling the urgent needs of their peoples.

But to compete in terms of weapons, which is incidentally the likely scenario contrary to all declared intentions, is a massive waste of resources, which will end in bankrupting either nation if not both. Hunger, and poverty are lethal when specifically combined with weapons of mass destruction; they become instruments of suicide when the socio-economic security of a nation is eroded. In any case, both nations, and ultimately the Third World, will be the losers in the arms race of the poor. If the ex-Soviet Union could not sustain its nuclear arms competition with the USA, it is not very likely that both India and Pakistan are likely to do so in confronting the outside world, or even each other.

China developed its nuclear capability at a time when it could have been afforded, and in which the ideological struggle was at its highest, with the emergence of "Maoism" as an alternative way of socialist orientation for the developing countries. Consequently, superpowers preoccupied with the associated meanings of nuclear capability were essential in the logic of times to provide an image of invulnerability and patronage to the process of decolonization, and the emergence of the non-aligned bloc of states.

It is doubtful that such aspirations are harbored by India and Pakistan, though it is sufficient to say that they can have a far superior role, and do provide the under-developed world with clear paradigms of achievements in the management of human resources, education, and models of economic development.

The strength of the Asian sub-continent lies in the fact that it has always faced challenges on all levels. And without any doubt, there have been many achievements that stand out. Perhaps both countries can show the rest of the world the strength of their power to utilize their

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Business scene

■ The fixed assets of the Arab Paper Converting and Trading Co. recorded a sharp rise of 31%, last year. They increased from JD 2.736 million in 1996 to JD 3.588 million. Its sales stood at JD 3.73 million and its reported sales were about JD 1.431 million. The company's overall production stood at 2980 tons. Its capital is JD 3.5 million.

■ A qualified industrial zone is scheduled for establishment at an area of about 500 dunums in the east of Jordan River. Total costs of the project are estimated at \$200 million, out of which \$80 million in the first phase to finance the infrastructure and the construction of buildings needed for the industrial utilization. It is reported that the project, that shall be completed by the end of next year, will provide 50,000 job opportunities. Among industrial plants to be established in the zone are foodstuffs, electronics, and other advanced industries.

■ National Cable and Wine Manufacturing Co. generated net profits of JD269,800 in 1997. Earnings from its sales reached about JD 1.37 million. The company's total budget was in the region of JD24 million by the end of last year and its shareholders' rights were JD 14.35 million.

■ Overall assets of Jordanian banks showed a 1% rise last March to reach JD9,896 billion (\$13.96 billion) compared with JD9,802 billion. Also deposits made a slight rise during the same month, to reach about JD 6,446 billion. Deposits of foreign currency reached JD 2,359 billion. According to the statistics released by the Central Bank of Jordan, money supply declined slightly to JD 1,700 billion in March compared with JD 1,725 billion in February. The bulletin also reached that the average of inflation was 6.5%, remaining similar to February's figure. Costs of living went up from 125.3 points in the February to 125.8 points in March. Trade deficit rose by 58% due to the increase in imports of consumer goods while exports remained stable. Domestic exports were about JD 72.9 million, whereas imports stood at JD 248.2 million.

Foreign Exchange Wednesday, 3 JUNE

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SEK	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEM	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Going down! Staple foodstuff prices drop despite expectations

By Iham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

ONE YEAR passed since the government started to liberalize consumer goods prices, a step that is seen as inevitable to prepare the country for the era of globalization. During this year, the Ministry of Supply started lifting subsidy on strategic foodstuff items such as rice, sugar, powdered milk and wheat, and therefore allowed the private sector to import these goods. This step is seen as one that would boost competition among merchants and provide a greater variety of goods at competitive prices.

However, since it was implemented, the philosophy behind price flotation has been hammered by many critics who warned that it would lead to more price hikes at the cost of the consumers.

Of course, merchants and some economic experts applauded this policy and pointed out that it will give the private sector a more active role and enhance competition among importers.

Today some people are surprised. They say that goods and commodities have actu-

ally dropped, if not staying the same.

Nonetheless, they still call for a tougher supervision from the government to stop any monopolistic practices of various merchants.

These greedy importers seek to dominate the market by swallowing the smaller ones who are still unable to operate individually and/or according to certain mechanisms.

What this actually means is that the flotation philosophy continues to be at the core of the dispute among the three parties concerned in the sell and buying process: the merchant, consumer and the government.

"We feel that the prices of basic food items such as rice and sugar, have remarkably dropped because of competition," says Abu Osama, an owner of a supermarket in Amman.

He adds that this is attributed to the decline in their prices on international markets. One ton of sugar declined within a year, from \$400 to \$320, and also a ton of Egyptian rice fell from \$440 to \$360. "This was positively reflected on the domestic prices, as a ton of sugar was sold at JD 260 compared with JD 320 before the liberalization was launched," he elaborates.

Another merchant who has just bought numerous bags of rice says, "Today we buy a ton of rice at JD 320, whereas it was JD 380."

"We as consumers noticed that this policy has one privilege, it has mobilized the situation in the markets, and there is no big difference in price from one shop to another," Amnah Ayesh tells *The Star*. Mrs Ayesh continues to say that now we have choice to buy the less expensive commodity. This means that there is a bigger supply of different varieties of goods. And as a result, consumers have become selective in looking for best quality and a cheaper price. "Maybe you find foodstuffs or vegetables that is costly at one of the shops in downtown Amman, but certainly it is less expensive in other areas or even if we buy them from sellers who sell in wholesale," she adds.

The irony is that many consumers do not hide their surprise about the results of the price liberalization. Though

one year is not enough time to evaluate its success consumers on the whole are satisfied with the prices.

But there are discrepancies. The National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP) in a recent study revealed that prices of commodities increase by 20 percent within a year.

This naturally means more burdens shouldered by consumers. The study says that the sole beneficiary from the liberalization program is the merchant who is free to raise prices and monopolize the market in the absence of tough supervision from the government.

Few days ago, the Ministry of Supply decided to cut prices of cereals from the warehouses as from 1st June between 4.5% and 25% excluding wheat. The measure is taken in response to the decline in their prices on international markets. The cuts apply to sugar, Chinese rice, American rice, barley and fodder.

By applying these reductions, the prices offered by the Ministry become equal to those fixed by merchants and private sector distributors.

For instance, the price of Chinese rice has been cut by 20%, as one ton would be sold at JD 250 compared with JD 300. Also a ton of American rice would be sold at JD 340 against JD 360, a fall of 5.8%. Could this carry good news for consumers and pave the way for more price declines instead of hikes? Nobody knows.

A recent field study conducted on vegetable prices showed that they fell by 1.5 percent last month compared with the same month last year. In addition, the price of chicken meat and water melons recorded a satisfactory drop.

King honors industrialists Jordanian industry has moved in great strides



King Hussein, Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Majali, Prince Zeid Ben Shaker being met by Chairman of Industry, Kaldoun Abu Hassan, Saturday.

By Star Staff Writer

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein honored, Saturday, 99 veteran industrialists, in a ceremony organized by the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) on the occasion of Independence Day.

During the ceremony which was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, shields and certificates were distributed among pioneers who are leading the industrial sector into an era of prosperity and well-being.

Addressing the audience, ACI Chairman Mr Khalidoun Abu Hassan said that local industry is passing through a critical transitional phase, in which it should be prepared to enter international organizations and to face global challenges.

What is needed and urgently, Abu Hassan added, is to enhance the competitive edge of national industry and make it more qualified. This naturally would enable it to continue growing in the international market, face competition, follow up on the latest technology and explore ways to guarantee free access to

new markets.

The ACI's chairman reiterated the need to exempt industrial inputs from customs tariffs, which is an old demand of industrialists in Jordan.

Attending ceremonies was also Minister of Industry and Trade Dr Hani Al Mulki who stressed that Jordan, thanks to the directions of His Majesty the King, was able to lay a foundation for industry and give much care to infrastructure, including water, electricity and telecommunications.

This base has expanded to include mineral industries such as phosphate, cement, and oil, to name but a few.

Today, Al Mulki said, there are more than 25,000 industrial establishments, which employ 12 percent of the work force in this country. These firms contribute about 20 percent to the Gross National Product. Also industrial exports stand for 90 percent of the total national exports, generating JD 900 million in revenues every year. Jordanian exports reach the markets of 110 countries in the world.

Speaking on behalf of the honored industrialists from the private sector, was Mr

Addul Majed Shoman, chairman of the board of the Arab Bank. He said that industry is a main source in the national economy, supporting it with about JD 3 billion.

He continued to say that the industrial sector contributed in achieving an additional value which reached JD 10.22 million in 1997 and created more than 14,000 job opportunities.

Industrialists in the Kingdom expressed their appreciation because of the King's visit to the chamber, which is the house of the industrialist, who is keen to give a helping hand to this vital sector that outlines the technological advancement in all economic sectors in Jordan.

Sources from the Chamber pointed out that the economy has entered a new era which requires great effort from both the public and private sectors to maintain the already fulfilled accomplishments and achieve more success in the long run. The current situation demands a creation of sound industrial body that can strongly face the challenges imposed by the coming global era that requires the removal of all restrictions that hinder

exchange of goods, services, technology, capital and expertise. The whole world, within few years, would be turned into a small village that knows no barriers. So, local industry should be prepared and the rehabilitation of firms should be speeded-up to comply with international standards and specifications.

During the honouring ceremony, industrialists agreed that May 30th of every year shall be named "a day for national industry," marking a historical event in the life of Jordanian industry.



King presents shield to Chairman of Arab Bank, Shoman

Russia wins more backing from IMF

By Christy Freeland

RUSSIA launched a new fiscal offensive and woo a promise of a continued stream of money from the International Monetary Fund, but the country's turbulent financial markets remained uneasy.

The IMF said that it would release the next \$670 million tranche of its \$9.2 billion loan to Russia by the end of June and praised the government's tough new budget package, insisting that there was no need to devalue the rouble.

Investors were less impressed. Moody's, the credit ratings agency, downgraded Russia's sovereign debt rating yesterday from Ba3 to B1 and share prices slid nearly 4 per cent, bringing the fall this month to nearly 40 percent.

Western banks, including Deutsche Bank, are believed to be in talks with the Russian government about additional financing. Deutsche Bank had no official comment yesterday.

The rouble, the focus of a week of financial turmoil which forced the central bank

to triple interest rates to 150 percent, strengthened slightly against the dollar.

Seeking to reassure investors concerned by Russia's troubled public finances, the government announced fresh budget cuts and a new tax collection campaign.

The plan included a 15 per cent cut in government spending and a pledge to seek more revenues by demanding at least 5 billion roubles (\$812 million) from Russia's 20 largest companies by the end of June and dropping a planned cut in the oil excise duty.

The cabinet also hopes to raise an extra 15 billion by accelerating privatization once the current financial tremors have abated.

Yeltsin has chosen Boris Fyodorov, Russia's aggressive former finance minister with experience in parliament and investment banking, to lead the tax collection offensive.

After a long phone conversation with Yeltsin yesterday, Helmut Kohl, German chancellor, one of the Kremlin's staunchest allies, expressed his confidence in the Russian

leadership and its ability to overcome the financial crisis.

The IMF also praised the government's crisis package, saying it should be sufficient to hold the budget deficit down to 5 percent of gross domestic product this year, bring calm to the troubled markets and secure the rouble. "All this adds up to a major action on the fiscal side," John Odling-Smee, the IMF's top Russia specialist, said. "The government's economic policies are wholly coherent and there is no reason for devaluation."

However, Odling-Smee stopped short of offering Russia a new financial stabilization fund, for which many investors have been

clamoring.

He said there had been no "formal discussions" between Russia and the IMF about a stabilization fund, but that Russia had been "making some inquiries" about its eligibility for additional IMF funding.

Another source of funding could be western commercial banks. "Victor" Khristenko [the deputy prime minister] explicitly said that in addition to talking to government and the IMF, they were exploring options with commercial lenders," said Charles Ryan, head of United Financial Group, a Moscow investment bank.

Financial Times Syndication

Global French company opens office in Amman

ENTRELEC, AN international company whose headquarters is in Lyon, France, is a worldwide leader in the manufacture of low voltage rail mounted terminal blocks. In view of its recent expansion, Entrelec earlier this

month opened a new regional office in Amman. This office, managed by Mr Michel Dunoyer, will service the entire Middle East.

Its establishment allows all clients to avail themselves of both the commercial and technical assistance through fast delivery and personalized service.

The Entrelec group presided over by Mr Pierre Bauer exceeds an annual turnover of about \$160 million worldwide.

The principle products range of Entrelec include: ■ Terminal block connections snapped onto "din" rail or soft soldered onto printed circuits

■ Electronic interfaces

■ Timers and monitoring relays

■ Control and signalling material for use in control rooms and for switchboards.

■ Remote input/output modules connecting the field-bus network.

■ Rapid and fault free pre-wiring system connecting Pic to relays, optocouplers and terminal boards.

The establishment of Entrelec's new Middle Eastern regional office strengthens the commercial stance of the group, which to date operates in 59 countries. Entrelec is a leader in the

manufacture of industrial low voltage components.

On behalf of the chairman and chief executive, Mr Christophe Graffin inaugurated the new office which opens the gateway to the Middle East market.

Entrelec chose Jordan over many other countries for its new office because of the image and stability of the country.

Mr Dunoyer uses Amman as a base to travel throughout the region providing its customers with technological and commercial assistance.

The Entrelec group manages companies in major industrialized countries throughout the world with sales composing 32 percent in France, 20 percent in Germany, 19 percent in Canada and US and 29 percent in other countries.

Entrelec has approximately 1,000 employees worldwide to maintain and has a significant annual turnover of \$160 million.

The philosophy behind Entrelec is to create added value through the research and development of new products and it is important also in the use of specialized outsourcing for assembly and commercial production of components, with the sale and marketing of finished products.



Highly skilled men and women of 12 different nationalities contribute to the development of Entrelec's

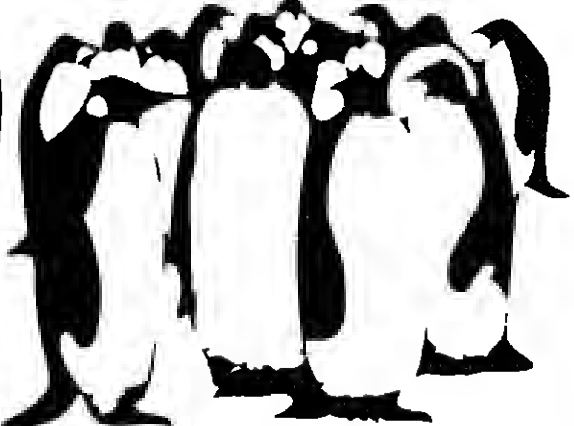
operations and such a highly skilled and qualified team allows Entrelec to market its products worldwide.

MARKET WATCH 30 May - 2 June

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal Oil Industry Middle East Bank International Trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bank of Jordan Land Development Union National Cable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROCOL National Industry United Engineering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ROCOL Al-Jade Industry Kawthar Investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Ra Press Phosphate Mine Land Development Union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Electricity Syria Phosphate Mine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Electricity Tamoud Insurance Jordan Tobacco Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal Chemical Industry International Tourism Hunting Bank
General Price Pointer: 179,960	179,800	178,490	176,560
Trade Volume: 1012220	963874	1133813	1156516
Stock Volume: 539347	734478	1045590	572113
Highest Traded Stocks:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Housing Bank: 338136 Union Bank: 653465 Al-Jade Bank: 335861 Arab Bank: 636025 			

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646968 Fax: 646949

AROUND
TOWN

Win a Holiday in London at the Terrace!

COME TO The Terrace at the Hotel InterContinental Jordan this summer and you will receive a voucher which you simply fill in with your name, address and telephone number and then deposit in the box provided. Draw dates for each of the three tickets are 30 June, 31 July and 30 August. The Terrace comes alive this summer with great live entertainment, Italian Pizzeria, Far Eastern delights, a Hubby Bubbly tent, and all football World Cup matches on a giant screen.

HOTEL
INTER-CONTINENTAL
JORDAN

Poetry festival kicks door wide open to Arab culture in Amman

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

Literature and art both play a significant role in society, in that they reflect the nation's ways of living and display diversified modes of thought.

It is the responsibility of the state to organize annual and seasonal festivals which can function as a way for people to meet and interact with each other.

In Jordan, everybody is familiar with the annual literature and art festivals held in Jerash, Fuhais, Zerqa and other parts of the Kingdom.

However, this year saw a newly-born festival for literature, in which poets and writers of short stories delivered their works. Held under the auspices of the secretary general of the Ministry of Culture and Youth, the "First Literature Festival" started its sessions last week with the participation of creative writers and enthusiastic poets from Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq. Held at the Hamdan Charity Society in Marka, the one-week venue succeeded in attracting a large audience, who were knowledgeable on poetry and writing, as well as some art critics who expressed their approval for the administration and organization of the Festival.

Munir Mezzyed, a poet and critic, aroused the sentiments and emotions of the audience when he recited his smooth flowing poetry both in Arabic and English, which demonstrated his unique and overwhelming style.

In one of his contemplative verses he says:

When I think of creation
I believe in God
When I behold beauty
I believe in art
When I dream in love
I believe in poetry
But, when I feel happy and content
I believe in virtue.

The energetic poet had his first collection of



Mohammad Al Atkarbi

poetry published in English. It was titled *Home, Love, Prayer*. Graduated from British and American Universities, Mr Mezzyed has published two collections in Jordan, and now is about to finish a collection called *Chapter from the Bible*. "In this book, I speak about Christ as a philosopher and as a poet," he explains.

His latest poem is called "My Love," which is a romantic piece in which he eulogizes his beloved Venus.

Meanwhile, from Egypt comes the delicate poetess, Manal El Sherbiny, who holds a BA



Sherbiny

in English Literature and works as an interpreter for the Jordanian daily, *Al Aswaq*.

Mrs Sherbiny opts for both classical and free style forms of poetry, and she is currently occupied with the preparations for the publication of her first collection entitled *Palm, Flute and the Nile*.

Her poetry has an air of romance about it, but at the same time, if you explore further into her style of writing, you will discover that she inclines to modernism.

Poetess Nabeelah Al Khateeb also took part in the festival, and she spoke about her earlier attempts to write poetry. Despite marrying at an early age which hindered her work, she managed to continue her academic studies and graduate from the University of Jordan whilst looking after her three children at the same time.

Al Khateeb, who is presently a teacher, published her first collection in 1995, "Saba Al-Bathan" (Bathan is her home village, near Nabulus) was republished in 1996 when all previous copies had been sold out.

Her poetry is well known for its humanitarian and romantic nature, whilst her new poetry has been noted for the level of its wisdom. She said enthusiastically, "Because of this, one Syrian critic compared my poetry with poems written by the famous Arab poet Zuhair Bin Abi Salma."



Mezzyed

Her works are mostly covered by the press, although other media forms are used, ensuring wide coverage for critics and fans alike.

Mrs. Al Khateeb has also participated in many festivals within the Kingdom.

The holding of the First Literature Festival was a good opportunity for poets, especially for those who are in need of promotion and assistance. However, the "Young Writers Family" from the Ministry of Culture and Youth criticized the weak coverage it received from all media forms despite the intensive promotional campaign that preceded the venue.

Al Khateeb



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Al Khateeb

THE FARE'S



Helen paused. With an audible "wumph," Murphy's familiar yipping had ended, and only the sounds of Ed's football game now emanated from the living room.



"There you are, my darling... Rawlings! Don't move!"

AGENDA

■ Homage to Federico Garcia Lorca

The Spanish Cultural Center continues its homage to Andalusian poet Garcia Lorca with a video presentation: Schedule as follows: June 4—Showing of a 1984 TV series based on the life of Mariana Pineda, a nineteenth-century Granada-born Spanish nationalist. Scripted by Lorca. In Spanish only, at Instituto Cervantes at 5 pm.

■ Films

The French-Arab Film Festival opens in Amman, today, Thursday 4 June. It will continue till 8 May. All showings, which are to start at 8:30 pm, is at the Concorde Cinema. The festival is being jointly organized between the French Cultural Center and the Abdel Hameed Foundation.

First to kick on 4 June off is the Arabic Al Youm Al Sadiq (Sixth Day). Directed by the well known Yusef Shalabi, the film is a joint French-Egyptian production.

In order to save her son from the disease, Sadiqa goes and work as a dish washer in the city and the story unfolds from there.

■ Ana Al Awan (Time Has Come) is a joint French Lebanese Production that will be shown on Friday 5 June. Directed by Claude Qudsi, who was born in Beirut, the film is about two people who come back to Beirut, having left to live in Paris after the break out of the Lebanese civil war. The two meet on the ship, and the rest of the film is about the return home after so many years away.

■ On Sunday 6 June, Safat Al Sahara (Desert Ship) is making its debut in Amman. A French-Algerian production, the film production is by Mohammed Al Shweikh.

■ The American Center and the Performing Arts Center of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation presents a lecture on "Theater and Youth" by American Theater expert Dendro Lavrakas on Monday, June 8 at 5 pm at the American Center in Amman.

■ The Goethe Institut presents a final lecture in Arabic by Professor Dr. Basam Tibi: June 4—"Muslim Minorities in the West: Between Isolation and Integration" with The Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies, at the World Affairs Council at 6 pm.

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'Encounter with The Creator'

Old inspirations made new

By Kofi Attah
Special to The Star

Ezeldine Shahrory's latest exhibition entitled "Old and New Inspirations" at the gallery of the Jordan Plastic Arts Association, marks a turning point in his spiritual development. For anyone familiar with his previous work, the metamorphosis is immediately obvious. Shahrory has awakened from youthful illusions to a more mature and spiritual-oriented artist embarking on new forms of expression that bring renewed vigor into his work.

His paintings still contain anecdotal tidbits that reveal the tragicomic quality of life in the back streets of Jordan, but in stark contrast to his previous painting, where the concentration was on the nude figure, "My figures used to be naked women, because I was influenced by him. And I did not know Allah," he confessed. The work in his last exhibition in 1997 at the Phoenix Gallery on Wasfi Al Tal Street was devoted entirely to female nudes, which he now describes as "immoral," continuing that he "has now repented, I pray and have an encounter with my creator."

Exhibit no. 1 in his recent exhibit is a good example of Shahrory's newly found spirituality. Like many of the pieces on

display, it is dedicated to the praises of Allah, starting stylishly with "Allahu Rahman Al Rahim" (God, the merciful and the gracious). Most of the 26 pieces on show are either Islamic calligraphy dedicated to the praises of Allah or extracts from the Holy Koran. Others are shapes depicting old things as well as new ones. "I love new and old things. However I must admit that I love old things more," he revealed.

His prowess with color is unique, but it is his mastery at wood carving that stand out the most. On pieces 23, 24 and 25 he has made use of wood and blended several colors to give them a copper-like appearance. He continues his spiritual crusade by inscribing the name of Allah on exhibit no. 24, "Sura Til Hajj": No. 12, an oil on canvas, confesses an encounter with Allah, the creator "Rahilallah" (God, our Lord) is by far the best work in the show. Designed on a golden board that glistens like real gold, it creates the spiritual atmosphere through which Shahrory conveys his message to his viewers. This piece also reminds us of the presence of Allah, his mercy and grace—no doubt one of the best depictions of the symbol of good and plenty that Allah is.

In addition to the recent spiritual awakening that has influenced most of his latest pieces, Shahrory also likes to shape

crowded scenes, dilapidated buildings and the debris of broken walls in Amman. His shapes are full of blended colors—black, green and violet—and recall passing times, nostalgic moments and, of course, Shahrory's favorite, old things. Although only few forms portraying the past featured in the exhibition, they demonstrate how much he is influenced by the past, by old things "on their way out."

Shahrory was born in Kuwait in 1973 and studied fine arts in the Institute of Fine Arts, Amman, Jordan. "Old and New Inspirations" is his third exhibition—the first two took place last year in Amman. Despite he is young, his talent is far in advance of his age.

The paintings on display depict God-man relationship, man and his environment and a society in full evolution. He uses his own mechanism to tell a simple story with an effective message about his perception of life. "I like to live and appreciate the realities of life," he declares.

Shahrory paintings, with their concentration on spirituality, submission to Allah, and a real interest in the common folk of Jordan, present a world that is ever changing and within which man should be grateful to Allah.

His exhibition continues till 6 June at the exhibition hall of the Jordan Plastic Arts Association, near Darat Al Funun, Al Mallah Street in Jabal Al Weibdeh, in Amman.



Shahrory

Shahrory

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 6 — 12 June

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Johnny Quest
3:30—I Wanna Be...
4:00—Neighbors
4:30—Ocean Wilds
5:00—French Program
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—Discovery Magazine
7:35—News Headlines
7:55—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prison
9:10—Sirens
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: Circles of Violence, starring Tuesday Weld and Peter Boner
12:00—Country Music

SUNDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Pumpkin Patch
3:30—The Pink Panther
3:50—Skippy
4:00—The American Chart Show
5:00—In The Wild
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—A Tour in France
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Life's most...
8:00—Faste of Africa
8:30—Challenges
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Correlli
12:00—The History of Rock & Roll

MONDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Highlander
3:30—Raiders of the South Pacific
4:00—Neighbors
4:30—Last Frontiers

Ocean Wilds (Documentary program), Saturday at 4:30 pm.

5:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Hope and Gloria
8:00—Perspective
9:10—99-1 "Stone"
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Law and Order
11:10—Bay Watch Nights

TUESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pro Star
3:30—Small Talk

Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): The Jackal
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): Liar-Liar
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): The Mirror Has Two Faces / The Preacher's Wife / Titanic
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Shadow Conspiracy
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Titanic
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): The Relic
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Kamanana (Arabic)

WEDNESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Mr. Bogus Show
3:30—Castle of Adventure
4:00—The Album Show
5:00—French Program
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Buddies
8:00—Envoy Special
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—The Old Curiosity Shop (Mini Series)

THURSDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Dinky Dis
3:30—The Animal Park
4:00—French Programs
4:30—Blue Water Dreaming
5:00—NBA Games
6:00—Slider
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:55—Big Brother Jake
8:00—Great Romance
8:30—Dr. Quinn, The Medicine Woman
9:10—The Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: Running Mates, starring Greg Webb and Barbara Howard
12:00—Can't Hurry Love

FRIDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Teddy Ruxpin
3:30—Wishbone
4:00—He Shoots, He Scores
4:30—Tarzan
5:30—The French Program
7:00—News in French

7:15—French Program

7:30—News Headlines
7:55—The Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Life on the Internet
8:30—The Brain
9:10—Babylon-5
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—The Old Curiosity Shop (Mini Series)

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

17:00—Faut pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine
L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE

18:00—Bonne espérance
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

LUNDI

17:00—Thalassa
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Cinq sur Cinq

MARDI

18:00—Les cœurs brûlés (6)
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Fractales

MERCREDI

17:00—Ushnaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

JEUDI

16:00—L'école des fans
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Atomes crochus

VENDREDI

17:30—Fort Boyard
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Allô la Terre

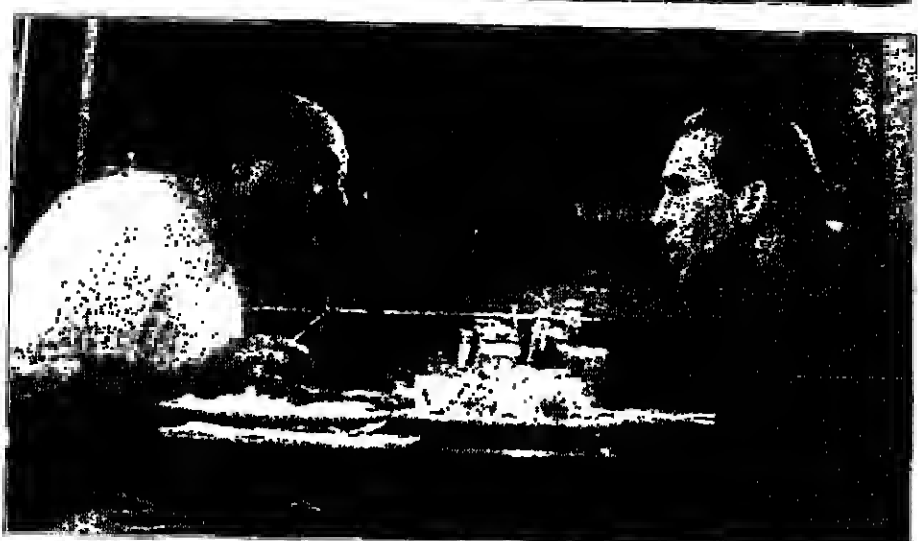
Programs are subject to change by JTV



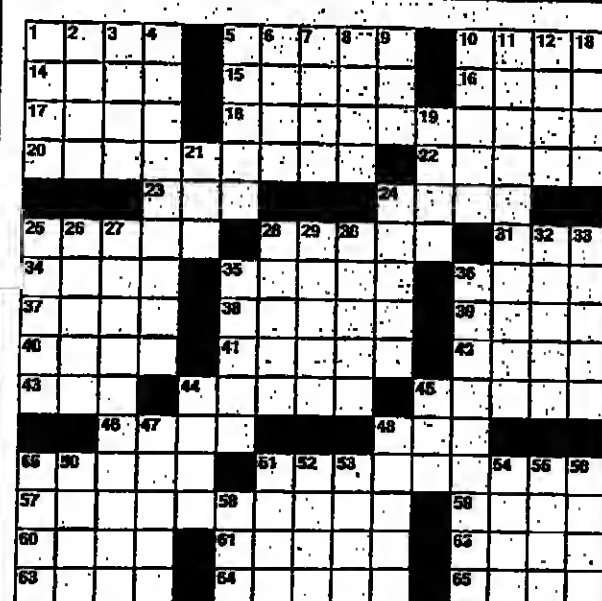
City of Angels

This romantic drama explores two souls, one mortal and one celestial, who must struggle with their willingness, and finally their need, to sacrifice everything familiar for the sake of love.

The film directed by Brad Silberling. Starring: Nicolas Cage, Meg Ryan, Dennis Franz, Andre Braugher.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS**
- 1 Health
 - 5 Volumes
 - 10 Tiff
 - 14 Rabbit
 - 15 Dunne of Hollywood
 - 16 Jacob's
 - 17 Dry
 - 18 Decadent
 - 20 Tasty
 - 22 S.A. range
 - 23 Shaver
 - 24 Against
 - 25 Rabbit fur
 - 26 Add points
 - 31 Enola
 - 34 Ersatz
 - 35 Hindu
 - 36 Depravity
 - 37 Merit
 - 38 City of light
 - 39 Chis
 - 40 Sea eagles
 - 41 Exhilarate
- DOWN**
- 42 Pretty
 - 43 whale
 - 44 Track
 - 45 Flower
 - 46 Ngajana's
 - 48 Conflict
 - 49 Vowel
 - 51 Pretentious
 - 57 Auspicious
 - 59 Gumbo
 - 60 In the
 - 61 Revers
 - 62 Bator
 - 63 Abstract
 - 64 Comes on
 - 65 Shopper's
 - 66 Delight

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun is in Taurus. It'll be in Gemini soon. Curious Gemini is always reading, investigating and asking questions. Make decisions.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Gather with friends to make a decision regarding money. More comes in from a private source. Dig into reserves so you can buy something you need.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Choose stability over excitement. You'll have enough excitement soon, anyway. Gather with friends and make solid plans for the future.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Organize an expedition with friends. The boss is in a good mood. If you've got a project, you're in luck. You'll get even luckier with the sun in your sign.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Study ways to stretch your dollars, so you can travel with friends. Making a good impression on an older person will improve your status, if not your financial situation. Do it anyway.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Team up with a brilliant partner to win the competition. Heed an older person's advice to find the money you need. An excursion with friends could lead to true love.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your conscientious work makes a great impression on an older person. Accept a compliment and you'll be more confident in expressing yourself.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Romance blossoms. If you don't whine about money. Show you can get by on less instead of asking for more.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You and your partner will get more done if you stick close to home. You may want to hide out just for the fun of it.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Accept a friend's coaching to finish a tough job on time. Friendship leads to love once you can find some privacy.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Put money down on a romantic excursion. Don't worry later that it's too expensive. It'll be worth it. Fix up your place so you can have friends over.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Be creative in explaining things to a stubborn friend. Be patient, too. Stash away as much money as possible. You'll be glad later that you did.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Tell your friend something you've been withholding, even if it means you get to make a new agreement.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: You can advance in your career if you start planning now. Friends bring you luck and abundance.

PERRY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Fortman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DEESU

VEALE

HUGONE

CADDIN

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

Answers: SUEDE LEAVE ENOUGH CANDID

IDEA: This can make a writer happy — A NOVEL

Would You Believe...

Scientists believe that many dinosaurs lived to be more than 100 years old.

The only food that provides calories without providing any nutrition is refined sugar.

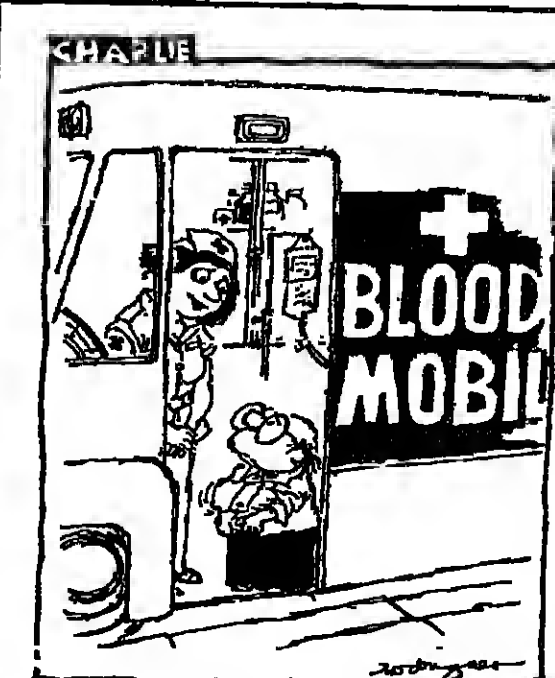
Gen. Stonewall Jackson's real first name was Thomas.

Erle Stanley Gardner, best known for his series of books about Perry Mason, sometimes used the pen name A.A. Fair.

Only 700 of the Philippines' 7,000 islands are populated.

Chippewa is another name for the Native American tribe called the Ojibwa.

The Grimm brothers were language experts and collected fairy tales only as examples of the German language.



"Thank you for donating the pint of blood, sir, and I wonder if you could also give us \$20—we're low on gas and we'd like to fill up the tank..."

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Virtuoso says living things 'made of music'

Organist seeks divine in common human life

By Christian Tyler

THIS IS no church mouse. Polishing off Messiaen's tumultuous "Le vent de l'Esprit," she kicked off her playing shoes and came down from the organ loft to acknowledge the applause. She was sheathed in a scarlet sequined dress whose skirts, slit to the thigh for pedalwork, showed a shapely pair of legs.

Dame Gillian Weir is a rarity among musicians, a female virtuoso and freelance concert performer on an instrument which, for most of the 2,300 years since its invention, has been the exclusive preserve of men.

Her playing, intense and theatrical, overpowered the judges when she won an international competition at the age of 23. Years later, a television cameraman filming her at three o'clock on a winter morning in Rouen was moved to tears by her playing of Cesar Franck.

Weir's vocation demands not only musicianship, but the mental acuity and physical coordination of a fighter pilot or an astronaut. And it needs stamina. After more than three decades at the top of her profession, she still travels the world for 300 days a year.

She is in England now, to perform the complete Messiaen organ works at Westminster Cathedral and to give the first concert of the Chelsea Festival on Monday.

We met for lunch at a place called Arcadia just off Kensington High Street. The walls were covered with French pastoral scenes and Muzak was dribbling from the speakers. I asked the patron if he would turn it down, and discovered that Gillian Weir is a founder member of the piped music-muzzling pressure group Pipedown.

"It does real harm, you know," she said in her soft New Zealand accent. "People say 'Oh, I can shut it out.' They develop a faculty for doing that. It's one of the reasons concert audiences can't concentrate."

In another mouth this might have sounded scholastic. But Weir is an intellectual of feminine charm: she may talk about quantum physics, Sufism and Schopenhauer, but she dresses like a diva and collects teddy bears.

"The diva ordered a spring roll, I chose asparagus, and we collaborated on grilled cod. Although she likes to drink wine, she demurred on this occasion."

Most "classical" organists



spend their time in churches or cathedrals. Gillian Weir frequents the concert hall equally. She has never held a church appointment, never needed or wanted one. Even if she had applied, she said, she would probably have been turned down on the grounds of her gender.

A great deal of the organ repertoire is devotional—Messiaen's music in particular. Did the performer have to be similarly inspired?

"You need a big space to make thousands of pipes sound right," she replied. "You need the space, not for religious atmosphere, but for the acoustics. I'd rather talk about spirituality."

Trying to express the ineffable something?

"Oh, definitely. 'Ineffable' is a word one can use because it's not loaded with a denominational meaning. It can be expressed in, say, the G minor symphony of Beethoven, or indeed in 'Così fan tutte,' the angelic and profound understanding and affection that Mozart has for his characters. It's the divine spirit in the human."

The Sufis, whom Weir studies, believe that music is higher than religion—indeed, that man is made of music. This, she thinks, is not as fanciful as it

sounds, given the modern hypothesis that matter is all one substance, manifested sometimes as particles, sometimes as waves.

"I think of truth as the centre of a wheel, with spokes which go out to different things—art, music, theology, physics. And we should link them together more. For example, if you are playing Couperin in an Italian salon [she is a harpsichordist, too], the curve of the phrase matches the curve of an arch, and the musical decorations match the architectural ones."

"Each is an expression of the kernel. If you keep relating back, then you stick to the truth. When things become translated, they become distorted, like tuning a harpsichord or organ without a tuning fork or a central pitch."

She swerved to another topic: the cramped technical teaching given to music students. "You shouldn't limit them to only one method. Give them the sound they're after, and let them find how to do it. I've found this again and again in master classes. You remove the barrier, and they do amazing things. How do you teach a baby to walk?"

I suppose you hold a sweet at the other end of the garden? "Exactly. You put its favourite toy on the other side of the

room and it learns to walk without the self-consciousness and therefore the limitation which would be imposed if you told it how to move its legs."

Weir has no children herself. Her first marriage lasted only four years. For the last 25 she has been married to Lawrence Phelps, a well known organ builder, who, she says proudly, may have designed more instruments than any man in history.

He is based in the US, and she lives—when she is not on the road—in the Thames Valley. "We keep the telephone company solvent," she laughed. "We speak three or four times a day and the bill is in the thousands."

"We meet quite often, but it is a crazy life. Even if we lived in the same place we still wouldn't be together because I'd be travelling. I admire people with a conventional marriage and career. I don't know how they do it. You're always torn. You short-change the marriage. We're very good friends. I actually think that's what marriage is in the end."

It was from the radio at home in New Zealand that Gillian Weir discovered her infatuation with music. She danced round the house, remembers exactly which stair she was sit-

ting on when she first heard Brahms's second piano concerto, and begged her mother for piano lessons. She cried all the way home when she failed to play a Beethoven sonata at first try.

In the end, she proved to be a prodigious sightreader: so much so that she was once disqualified from a competition because the jury could not believe she hadn't seen the piece before. For the same reason she never learned to improvise, as other top-flight organists do.

"It's not because I don't want to, it's because I can't. By the time I was aware of it, I had son of lost my innocence." She agreed that young musicians should learn to make the sounds before learning to read the notes, as babies do.

Does she write music?

"Definitely not. 'There's so much bad music in the world—and much of it sent to me in illegible manuscripts—that I don't want to add to it.'"

The permanent switch from piano to organ happened almost accidentally after Weir played at Alkmaar in the Netherlands and heard Bach's counterpoint with new ears. "When each new voice came in I remember feeling that someone was coming up the aisle carrying a flag," she said.

While still at the Royal College of Music, she was persuaded against her will to enter the competition in St Albans which launched her career. She had to be chivvied up the road in her Mini, detained on a tombstone in the cathedral graveyard and finally tracked down to a friend's house. "I was very insecure and shy."

"Are you still nervous?" "Yes, about some things. I feel I understand the world of music better than I understand anything else."

"Sometimes everything else seems so completely, crazy—like dealing with the gas board and the electricity people."

Music is for expressing the inexpressible, she said. "It is the ultimate."

It is also therapeutic: the Russians use it to treat arthritis and it is known to help mental patients. It keeps the morning commuters moving at railway stations. It can stir warlike spirit, or be used to keep the peace. But piped music at luncheon—piped music at any time—that's a different thing altogether.

Financial Times Syndication

By James Reston Jr.

APOCALYPSE NOW ... Apocalypse Then ... Apocalypse Forever ... Apocalypse Sooner. Later, or Never ... not to mention the Final Apocalypse—when did this lofty word become so sinister?

The last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, sometimes called the Book of the Apocalypse, has something to do with the word's modern association with disaster. In that fantastic and confusing book, we find the images of horrible monsters, islands changing their positions, the heavens opening up. Through the first millennium-and-a-half after Christ, these stories were seen as metaphors, the mystical and perhaps even demented imaginings of the apostle St. John the Divine. The tales of an end time were not meant to be treated literally, nor were they so depicted.

In its modern usage, however, the word "apocalypse" occasions fear and trembling. But the word has been draped with this terrible trapping only in the past 500 years. If we go back to its Greek derivation, the word means an unveiling, an uncovering, a disclosure.

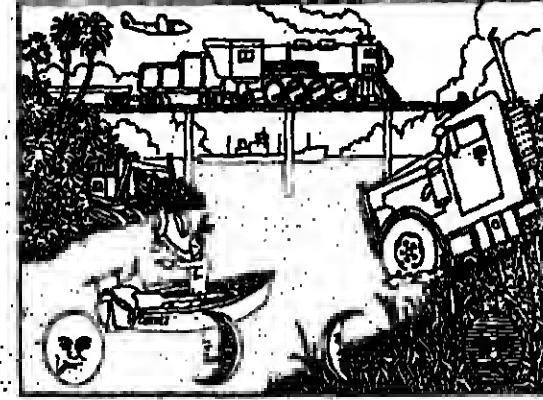
I put the transformation of the word's meaning from revelation to catastrophe down to an exact year, 1498 AD; to an exact place: Nuremberg, Germany; and to an exact work: a series of woodcut etchings called "Apocalypse" by Albrecht Dürer. Of all the visual depictions of the apocalypse, these disturbing drawings are the most famous. Dürer wiped out the abstract and mystical images. By blending realism with fantasy, his works enhanced the fear and foreboding about the apocalypse. The imagined foreknowledge of our own end—and what's to come in its wake.

Dürer's etching of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" is the best known of the series. The woodcut possesses a horrifying dynamic movement as the four horsemen gallop across the sky, vying with one another for position, trampling their victims underfoot. The rider on the black steed is the central figure. While he trails his balance of justice and judgment behind him in the

wind, his face is natural, muscular, human, except that his eyes are blank as if he were blind.

The Fourth Horseman, Death, is placed below the black stallion. The avenger is an emaciated, sick-like figure, with a gaunt face and wild eyes. He carries a pitchfork instead of the traditional scythe, as if he is harvesting rather than killing. His advanced age, his crazed look, his decrepit horse make him all the more terrifying.

If Dürer's "Four Horsemen" are his most famous apocalyptic work, his portrayal of the opening of the Fifth and Sixth Seals of the sacred book that held the fate of the world lies at the heart of the modern concept of apocalypse. This was the passage in Revelation that so transfixed wacky acolyte David Koresh in Waco, Texas, before his fiery group immolation. The artist did not depict the actual opening. Nor did he depict the earthquake that occurred after the Sixth Seal was broken. Rather, he imagined the



result of the opening. A shower of burning stars rains down upon a cowering humanity, as the sun turns black "as a sack of cloth of hair" and the moon becomes blood red. The triangle of falling, burning stars is the focus of the woodcut.

As a work of art, Dürer's woodcut of the Fifth and Sixth Seals may be less successful than the Four Horsemen. But it established firmly the idea of the apocalypse as the fiery end for humankind to what for us seems very like a nuclear conflagration.

Often, the question is asked if terror reigned in the streets a thousand years ago as the world approached the first millennium. The answer, is clearly no. The Western world of 1000 AD was an illiterate place with no awareness of the calendar and no real appreciation of the passage of time.

But if we must have a historical parallel for a time seized with rampant paranoia about the end of the world, 1500 AD is the year. When that jubilee year approached, the industrious and God-fearing populace of Europe was consumed with religious foreboding. At last, it was believed, the long-awaited return of Christ would come to pass.

In part, the paranoia can be explained by the invention of printing. Gutenberg's printing press had arrived in Nuremberg, and in the years after, the presses turned out literature and art with unparalleled speed and in unparalleled quantity.

In 1472, astronomer Johannes Regiomontanus printed a series of popular calendars. For the first time in Western civilization, there was a wide appreciation of the passage of days and years, especially toward an apocalyptic benchmark. The calendars were widely distributed, and Regiomontanus was summoned to Rome by Pope Sixtus IV to work on the reform of the calendar.

Coupled with the wide dissemination of the calendar was a technical advance in clock-making. The invention of the coiled spring around 1500 made it possible to mass-produce small, lightweight clocks for the home.

The tick of the clock went along with the turning of the calendar page to give the citizen of Reformation Europe a fresh and intimate awareness of the passage of time toward an unnerving and clearly inevitable landmark date.

And what happened at the date was a revelation: the arrival of Martin Luther and the shaking of the Catholic Church to its very roots.

Ironically, Luther himself had grave doubts about the Book of Revelation and relegated it to an appendix in his "German New Testament." Today, "if we have anything overtly apocalyptic, it is the year 2000 computer problem."

But fear not. We will get through that. We may have a few 'eye openers' before it's over, but it will not be as unsettling as the Protestant Reformation around 1500 or as historic as the Christianization of Europe, nearly all at once, in the year 1000. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Giant primates need help 'going natural'

Orangutan rehab

By Jack Barker

Nearly 7,000 miles seems a long way to go to watch a video first shown on British television in 1975.

So it was with some surprise that I found myself in a small room in the heart of a rainforest listening to the measured tones of Sir Peter Ustinov on a TV documentary.

I strained to see the forest, shrunk to the size of the small colour screen—whereas 100 yards in any direction, there was the real thing.

However, it turned out to be a good introduction to the Bukit Lawang Orangutan sanctuary in Sumatra, providing a guide to etiquette before walking into the forest to meet one of man's nearest relatives in the wild.

Orangutans are very nearly human, sharing 94.6 percent of our genes, a proportion only exceeded by chimpanzees, which tend to be rewarded by being given cigarettes, cosmetics and trial drugs.

The Sumatrans have always known that the orange-furred "people of the forest" are close relatives and assume that the only reason orangs do not speak is that they do not want to be recruited into the work force.

An 18th century English explorer fell for this line and brought an orang-utan to parade around London dinner parties dressed in a full suit of clothes to see if fine wines could loosen his tongue. His protegee quickly learned to lay about on cushions and daybeds, and even shook an elongated finger at passers-by every now and then, but for all this sophistication, never said a single word.

They do share many human characteristics. Like us, orang-utans gestate for nine months, have one baby at a time, and then have to look after them for years. With their only homes in Sumatra, Borneo and Malaysia, the population is finding it impossible to maintain its numbers at a time when timber companies and relocating humans are chipping away at their habitat.

Faced with ever falling numbers the Bukit Lawang sanctuary has been estab-

lished to rehabilitate monkeys rescued from captivity, loggers and angry farmers with eaten crops, and ease them back into the wild.

Unfortunately the animals are actively sought by overseas collectors and private buyers. Traditionally, they are status-enhancing pets for high-flying officials and even though the climate of opinion in Indonesia has now changed, once they have been kept in captivity it is not just a matter of letting them go.

They can bring human diseases to the wild population, for a start—but that is only if they do not die first.

An adolescence spent in a cage costs pet orangs the environmental knowledge they need to survive. The rehabilitation centre at Bukit Lawang was established in 1972 by two Swiss women to train recaptured orangs to find their own food.

Now the project has been taken over by the Indonesian government and the chance to see the centre's pioneering work first-hand has become one of Sumatra's prime attractions.

The Bohorok river forms a natural boundary of Gunung Leuser national park. On one side a sprawling line of guest houses and restaurants; on the other virgin rainforest. A path runs along the bank, lined by piles of inflated truck inner tubes provided for Indonesian tourists who get within a 100 yards of the rehabilitation centre before taking to the rapids, splash happy.

Western visitors tend to carry on to where the path comes attached to a slung line, used against the current to wobble and list across the river. Orang-utans are scared of water and I suddenly understood why.

The hase camp is a simple collection of houses where recently captured orang-utans wait out their quarantine in cages in between expeditions with their keepers for lessons in tree-climbing and identifying food.

Their teachers are all volunteers from the west. (There is no shortage of them; don't call them, they'll call you.) Tuition is a long procedure involving endless patience, which is something I was

pleased to have glimpsed during the introductory video.

Tourists are not allowed to get too close to the gentle art of retraining orang-utans: often psychologically disturbed by years of captivity, they show behavioural problems any schoolteacher would recognise.

The public display is the feeding of those orang-utans most recently released into the wild. For their first few months of freedom they are offered a twice-daily dose of bananas and water while they work out what bits of their forest they can eat.

My visit was in the wet season, which also happens to be (for orang-utans) the food season, so I got up early for the morning bananafest: the afternoon feed tends to be thinly patronised as at this time of year even an urbanised Orang can track down enough shoots and fruits to skip tea.

Rain did mean the walk up the steeply sloping path to the hilltop feeding station was slick with water and slippery underfoot. Twenty-five visitors, discreetly silent, climbed in single file behind a couple of Indonesian rangers carrying branches thickened by hands of green bananas.

When we reached the feeding platform we did not have long to wait. Far in the forest we could hear the first heavy noises of wildlife stirring, and then through the canopy they came swinging on their long forearms. The adults were the height of supermodels—but rather suppler about the hips and completely at home in their jungle.

For a long moment, the tableau froze. Tourists stared up into the trees. The first orang-utans swung to a halt, dangling by hands or feet, and stared straight back, swaying gently. A rattle of compact cameras went off, flashing faintly into the deep shade of the trees, and the orang-utans seemed to relax. Nothing unexpected so far. Three homed in on the action: bananas and drink.

As the two rangers tipped mugs of water their mouths puckered wide to catch every drop, spare hands speeding



the angle like impatient inmates of an old people's home. Then, shedding such servility, they snatched as many bananas as fruit, before climbing quickly clear to peel and munch uninterrupted.

A mother and child came swinging close and a collective "aah" swept through the audience. A large female had a helpless baby clinging on to her flank that cried out occasionally with fear. As if one infant was not enough, the mother was also helping an older child, leading hands and legs on to secure holds as the family worked their way slowly to the feeding platform.

The volley of sputters reached a frenzy and the first faint sounds of electronic rewinds broke the jungle silence and our

group concentration scattered in frantic searches for replacement film.

Once the edge was off their hunger, the orangs settled down to give their audience a once-over. The small baby, a startled face under a shock of mad-professor hair, took too close a look at a couple of over-weight tourists and started to cry.

An adolescent struck a pose with legs and arms hanging diagonally up, burn low like a double arrow, pointing down. And directly below was a rager. He moved quickly aside, I looked up nervously, but there were no strong branches overhead and I would not be needing a waterproof hat.

The orange faces yawned, stretched and frowned in expressions mirroring our

own. The young orang that still needed help to climb found himself unable to reach a clump of bananas and threw a tantrum. He threw himself on his back and kicked his legs in the air and squealed.

This was a familiar scene to the western spectators, who looked away, embarrassed, while the orang-utans also pretended not to notice.

Sheepishly he pulled himself together and tottered back to mum, reaching out a hand and touching her shoulder in an apparent need for reassurance. The performance was so human I started to feel like eating a banana myself. ■

Financial Times Syndication

'Yellow' suspenseful, energetic, wise Korean director updates 'coming of age' in new film

By Kevin Thomas

HOLLYWOOD—As ambitious and rewarding as it is, Chris Chan Lee's 'Yellow' has a significance beyond itself. It's the first major Korean American film to get a regular release.

It's also a classic coming-of-age story, set during one long night just before eight high school friends are to graduate. You're tempted to describe the picture as 'Korean American Graffiti,' but along with its humor it has an underlying—and disturbing—seriousness.

The film's central figure is Sin Lee (Michael Daeho Chung), a clean-cut young man who is awaiting word on several university scholarship applications and facing a summer of working in his father's central Los Angeles grocery store.

It's the last Friday evening before his graduation, and Sin would naturally like to join his friends in a night of fun. But his father Woon Lee (Soon-Tek Oh, in one of the finest performances of a distinguished career), a martinet verging on the hysterical, insists he must work, closing the store later on and then joining a traditional Friday evening family gathering with his grandmother.

A black man hassles Sin on the price of an antic and tells him he'll be spending his life behind the counter, just like his father. Already a bundle of pent-up rage on account of his father's treatment, Sin is shaken by the possibility that the customer's angry words could come true and result in

explode when three youths come in just as he is closing up.

We jump ahead and a distraught Sin, who has skipped the family dinner, tells his friends that the youths held him up and robbed the till of about \$1,500. When Sin feels there is just no way that he can face his fearsome father with the truth, 'Yellow's' plot kicks

score.

Lee has found a way to mine an array of issues in an entertaining and increasingly urgent and suspenseful manner. In effect, Lee has discovered a highly effective method to explore the generation gap between the students and their immigrant parents with their traditional conservative values that so often clash with their

where he saw children orphaned, naked and starving and became determined that he must never let up in providing for his family.

While the entire thrust of 'Yellow,' whose title takes on a double meaning, referring to cowardice as well as to race—has to do with Sin taking responsibility for himself, Lee also sends a warning that parents can be so strict that they can destroy the children they ostensibly want only to make strong. As events unfold, an intimidated, straight-arrow kid like Sin is more vulnerable to making major mistakes that could affect his life than his more cynical and worldly pal Alex (Burt Bullock).

Lee is a splendid writer and has a way with actors as well. He has created a complex character in Teri, who has problems respecting Sin. A standout among Sin's friends is the exceedingly bright and independent Grace (Angie Suh) who is in a constant state of rebelling against her mother's wishes that she be "more charming and ladylike."

Through the specificity of this Korean-American experience you can easily feel a sense of universality in Sin's predicament. As a filmmaker Lee is at a point where he's stronger at dialogue than poeing. But there's no doubt 'Yellow' marks the debut of a most promising talent.

At its core is a strong drama about the need for mothers and daughters to communicate their love for each other and about how a woman with few resources copes with having to rebuild her life from scratch.

In his second feature (following 'Waiting to Exhale') the formidable actor Forest Whitaker sensitively directs a sterling cast in Steven Rogers' in many ways admirable script. But 'Hope Floats' is undercut by flat, soft, sentimental Hollywood glow, a lot of artificial

'Hope Floats' lacking sharpness, focus Small-town romance too sentimental to be true

By Kevin Thomas

HOLLYWOOD — 'Hope Floats' has a terrific opening. Tempted by the offer of a free make-over, a Chicago housewife and mother (Sandra Bullock) goes on a Jerry Springer-type TV show (hosted by a deliciously uncouth Kathy Najimy) only to be confronted unexpectedly by her best friend (an unbilled Rosanna Arquette), who promptly announces that she's having an affair with Bullock's husband.

Completing the horrendously public devastation is the appearance of the unfaithful husband (Michael Pare) who has no idea he's going to be confronted by both his wife and his lover.

Totally devastated, Bullock's Birdee Pruitt does what many women with few options would do under the circumstances: run home to mother. In this instance mother happens to be Ramona Culvert (Gena Rowlands), a free spirit living in a fine old house in a beautiful small town in West Texas.

Yet as inviting as this Norman Rockwell community looks to be, it is not an unalloyed safe haven. Ramona is a beautiful woman, with a dynamic personality and a lot of wit, much wisdom and self-knowledge but she does not realize she has failed to express the love she genuinely has for her daughter. It's always been her father (James Harell) who gave Birdee the warm embraces and made clear his affection, but now he is in a rest home suffering from Alzheimer's; his ability to comprehend life is wavering at best.

'Hope Floats' itself wavers. At its core is a strong drama about the need for mothers and daughters to communicate their love for each other and about how a woman with few resources copes with having to rebuild her life from scratch.

In his second feature (following 'Waiting to Exhale') the formidable actor Forest Whitaker sensitively directs a sterling cast in Steven Rogers' in many ways admirable script. But 'Hope Floats' is undercut by flat, soft, sentimental Hollywood glow, a lot of artificial



cutesy-poo comic touches around the edges—does Ramona really have to have a thing for stuffed animals?—and too many golden oldies on its soundtrack edging out Dave Grusin's apt score.

The filmmakers might have benefited from a screening of the timeless 'Picnic' as an example of how to portray small-town American life free of quaintness and caricature but not of humor. A sharper edge could have taken a pretty good, if uneven, picture to greater heights, considering its potent ingredients and actors.

Even so, 'Hope Floats' gives good value, starting with Bullock's and Rowlands' knockout performances. Pare is likewise impressive as a man whose good looks have belied an essential weakness of character, and so is Cameron Finley as Birdee's imaginative, sweet-natured little nephew, left to Ramona by her sister who's gone off to pursue a career in Hollywood.

At its best 'Hope Floats' delineates insightfully not only Birdee and Ramona's relationship and that of Birdee with her little daughter Bernice (Mae Whitman, easily as effective as Bullock and Rowlands) but also of Birdee and Bernice to adjusting to small-town life. Bruce left home as the gorgeous prom

queen who married the handsome high school star quarterback and has now returned, humiliated on national TV, with no job skills, too many bad hair days and too many contemporaries with long-held jealousies unable—or unwilling—to hide their gloating at her return in defeat.

If Birdee is going to have any kind of life she's really going to have to dig in. Similarly, Bernice has to go through the familiar ordeal of being the new kid in school, adjusting to a radically different environment, and therefore longing only for her beloved father—she too is a daddy's girl—to come rescue her.

Not all is grim for Birdee, because who should be Ramona's handyman but Justin Matisse (Harry Connick Jr.), ruggedly handsome in tight jeans, who adored Birdee in high school but was too shy to say so. It seems Justin, an artisan-level carpenter, is back from California, where his painstaking qualities made him "too slow" on the job and is now building his own Neo-Craftsman cottage in a forest, happy to be back where he can be "doing things the right way."

There's no doubting Connick's impact as Justin, but speaking of 'Picnic,' this man could use at least a measure of

character development afforded William Holden's unforgettable Hal, the archetypal sexy guy in a small town.

The patient Justin is your basic Sensitive Hunk, but Connick and the story warrant more than this. We know nothing of Justin's personal life. Is he divorced? Has he been seeing anyone else when Birdee returns? We need to know more about the man to make him seem more than a plot contrivance. (Justin's improbable surname does elicit a genuine laugh when Birdee's daughter says she never wants to be known as "Bernice Matisse.")

'Hope Floats,' which fortunately does pull together for a strong finish, is nevertheless a real plus for Bullock, who served as the film's executive producer. She's had difficulty capitalizing on her career-making appearance four years ago in 'Speed' after some dismal choices ('Speed 2' among others) and this is a step in the right direction.

Birdee requires Bullock to dig deep to portray a woman who above all else has to define for herself whatever responsibility she had for the failure of her marriage. ■

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THE STAR'S STAY NO

Edited by Zeid Nasser

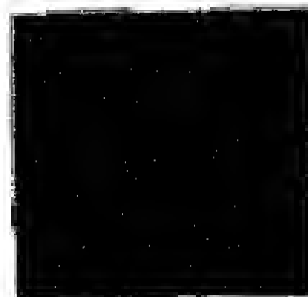
Key features of Arabic Explorer 4.0

THE CONCEPT behind the creation of Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4.0 Arabic Edition was not to recreate the Explorer, but to further increase the availability of Arabic language software in the region. With IE 4.0 Arabic Edition, Microsoft has succeeded in opening a new door for Arabic users who may be unable to use the English language or more simply, prefer to use a Web browser in their own language.

In addition, Internet Explorer Arabic will facilitate on all-Arabic environment when accessing Arabic Web sites that are becoming more common in the region. This will eventually lead to the creation of an Arabic Digital Nervous System that will facilitate communication on levels to the entire Arabic speaking world.

How is Internet Explorer 4.0 Arabic Edition different from the English version? Internet Explorer 4.0 Arabic Edition has the same features as the English version, with the addition of a specific new feature for Arabic being Multiple Code Pages. Arabic support in E-mail, and Arabic Web page development

with FromPage Express. What are active channels? Active channels are streams of information from content providers who provide registered subscribers with updated, personalised information on any subject to



their PC via the Web. Subscribers are able to connect to any type of information service, whether it be world financial news or entertainment and sports news. Updated information can be 'pushed' to the subscribers PC periodically. The subscriber can also personalise the information being received by choosing the preferences that he or she desires. The thought behind the release of IE 4.0 Arabic

Explorer is to encourage the growth of such services in the Arabic language.

When will we see these available in Arabic? At present, there are no active channels in Arabic due to the previous unavailability of a complete Arabic solution to support this. Now, with the latest edition of IE 4.0 Arabic, we expect fully functioning Arabic channels to be online in 3 months time. The first Arabic channel, which will be providing news services, has been confirmed.

What are Microsoft's views on the impact this new Arabic version of Explorer 4.0 will have on the Web in the Arabic speaking region? Microsoft believes that the release of Arabic Explorer will not only contribute to more Arabic users logging on the Web, but will actually encourage content providers to put more Arabic content on the Web, thus facilitating the growth of Arabic presence on the Internet and increasing the number of Arabic Web sites available. Microsoft believes that this will benefit the region and the proliferation of Internet usage as companies in the

Middle East will be able to operate with the same levels of efficiency as other companies in the U.S. and Europe. This will be a first for the Middle East and its execution will be partially attributed to the release of Internet Explorer 4.0 Arabic Edition.

Due to IE 4.0 Arabic Edition support an Arabic search engine? Index server is the index and search engine of Internet Information Server. Both product ship with Microsoft Windows NT and support the Arabic language's exact

UNIX ahead now, NT to take the future lead: UNIX Vs. Windows NT

THE BATTLE is on between Windows NT and UNIX, both of which are vying for the supremacy of networked computing environments.

1997 came to a close with UNIX enjoying massive growth, and with the potential for more growth in UNIX systems being predicted by industry analysts.

The Aberdeen Group estimates that UNIX revenues should increase by \$37 billion dollars by the year 2000. It is expected that UNIX revenues will continue to grow by around 42 percent a year.

This represents a mounting challenge to Microsoft, who's Windows NT software, although being a powerful platform, still suffers from some shortcomings. These include the fact that Windows NT cannot run on a multi-processor

system that incorporates more than 4 processors, and that there are some fears of incompatibility among Windows NT versions.

Still, the might of Microsoft is not to be underestimated, and there are many major hardware vendors who have put their weight behind Windows NT operating system software.

Responding to the challenge, major vendors offering UNIX as a key component of their computer solutions strategy have re-enforced their presence in the workstation, server markets for networking solutions.

Hewlett-Packard, Sun Microsystems, Oracle and Informix have all been working hard to ensure UNIX keeps on going strong by upgrading their distribution channels, offering much more UNIX promotion and service support and guaran-

teeing that their company's are closely linked with UNIX as a standard.

For example, Hewlett-Packard is a sponsor of the Football World Cup '98, and advertising itself as 'HP UNIX'. Analysts believe that UNIX may have won the battle for now, and may continue to rule the networked computing environment for a couple of more years. But, by the beginning of the next decade, Windows NT will be the force to look out for, mainly due to its flexibility across different hardware platforms, its ease of use and because it serves very well within a Graphical User Environment.

In 1999, Analysts predict that the Windows NT market will grow by 100 percent, hitting the massive figure of \$6.5 billion dollars in that year.

News update

Protect your PC from email viruses

● Sophos has introduced its Anti-Virus 3.0 software package, which includes Inter-Check technology: capable of countering email attached viruses. Apart from the fact that Sophos Anti Virus can detect and remove 12,000 viruses, it also covers 'specialized' software viruses which have emerged in recent years.

Once installed, the Sophos software automatically runs checks on the software running on a network, routinely reporting on findings. As far as email is concerned, it can detect and remove viruses attached to or held within email messages: by providing an alert to the network administrator. This coverage of a multi-user environment is becoming an important requirement for anti-virus software. Among other 'specialized' viruses which Sophos can

catch and kill, there are 'macro-viruses' which attach themselves to software macros such as Lotus 1-2-3 and spreadsheets in general. For more information, log into the Sophos site at www.sophos.com.

HP Desk Jet 400L ● As part of its very successful Desk Jet series, Hewlett-Packard (HP) has introduced the Desk Jet 400L, which offers a dots per inch (dpi) of 600X300, and provides a printing speed of 2 pages a minute.

As for color printing, it offers 300X300 dpi at a speed of 4 to seven pages a minute. The printer incorporates HP Color Smart technology which controls the printing of some 16.7 million colors. The HP DeskJet 400L is a lightweight printer (6.6 pounds), and occupies very little desk space and includes a tray with space for 50 papers. This ink-jet printer is targeted at the low-end user (home users, small business users, for more information, contact Scientific & Medical Supplies Co. (SMS) at telephone 4624907.

matching' searches. There are complimentary Arabic search products on the market, built around Microsoft's Internet Information Server (IIS), that provide additional features.

Where can users get their hands on a copy? Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4.0 Arabic Edition has been in the market for several weeks. Internet Explorer Arabic Edition is available free of charge and can be downloaded off the Microsoft Web site: <http://www.microsoft.com/ie/download/>

INTERFACE ZEID NASSER

A 'computerized' World Cup '98

THE WORLD Cup is upon us again, and it looks set to be the 'Mondial of the Decade'. For most of us, this World Cup is quite different.

Like everything else in our lives, the Internet is playing an active role in changing the nature of our 'interaction' with the World Cup. You can expect to find news, analysis, game results and even video and audio clips and highlights from matches all over the Internet, at numerous sites. What's more, you could possibly even watch a large part of a match on the Internet, if you have the connection with the right speed.

On another front, Hewlett-Packard has implemented an advanced networking environment, based on UNIX, which will enable the large number of journalists and delegates at the World Cup to stay in touch, and exchange electronic information with the whole world. This relies in part on the Internet too.

The World Cup has always created a craze among computer users. Since the early eighties, when personal computers took off, game software producers have fought over the rights to produce the 'official' World Cup computer games. Football games are amongst the top selling software categories: FIFA World Soccer is a massive hit and top seller, and so are so many other football computer games.

To all the computer and football fans out there, we say 'have a great World Cup'; thanks to advanced networking technologies and the Internet, this is one World Cup that fans will be able to view on their PC screen and on their TV.

Internet addicts in Jordan?

IT WOULD be fair to say that there is a growing number of 'Internet addicts' in Jordan, especially nowadays as Internet Service Providers in the country are offering unlimited access (24 hours a day, seven days a week) for as little as JD 35 a month. This time last year, it cost around the same sum to get only twenty hours on the Internet!

What's more, the Internet's sweeping effects on society have meant that so many more young Jordanians are logging in, to get all the information they need on their favourite topics.

In short, it may be time that a study was conducted regarding the number of hours in a day spent by locals on the Internet. It should produce some interesting results. Also, we need to look into any side effects that may be resulting from excessive use of the Internet.

Already in Europe and the USA, there are people diagnosed with a number of mental and physical illnesses due to over exposure to computers and the Internet!

This is a long and interesting topic, which we will provide detailed coverage of in the coming weeks.

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Sculptor turns Ghanaian Termite Hills into bronze 'Cathedrals'

By Geoff Gehman

STEVE TOBIN likes the motto "Security is in the risk." Borrowed from tennis coach Bill Adams, the statement summarizes the sculptor's ambitious for-profit for-profit and audacious shelter of 1,500 cast matoz.

It's an ideal description of his latest project, for which he spent six weeks in the African jungle with two crew members and 30 local laborers, molding termite hills while being molded by tribal customs.

Tobin's most recent attempt to conjure nature's sophisticated power can be found in the studio gallery-barn at his Coopersburg, Pa., spread. As wide as 8 feet and as high as 15 feet, the dozen insect-tower sculptures resemble sand-castle versions of Antonio Gaudi's fanciful church in Barcelona, Spain.

It was 1994 that Tobin first visited termite hills near Nsawam, Ghana. His guide was Ghana native J.C. Sarpang, a sculptor and Tobin's assistant. "I am inspired by the way Steve attacks an with full vigor," says Sarpang, whose wife and three children live in the Ghanaian capital of Accra. He smiles and adds: "I sometimes call him crazy."

Sarpang doesn't call Tobin crazy for admiring termite hills. The Ghanaian knows these cooling towers for nests are models of efficient climate control. African huddlers, in fact, incorporate the insect engineering that maintains temperature within two degrees. Sarpang also knows Tobin isn't the first termite-hill artisan. Centuries ago his tribe, the Ashanti, converted parts of these dramatically eroded dirt towers into refractory molds for their venerated miniature gold weights.

More than 100 years old, termite hills are the insect kingdom's pyramids. "They're cathedrals," insists Tobin, a 41-year-old native of Philadelphia. "They're monuments to the insect gods. They're everything our monuments are." He's sitting on an African stool in his artifact-crammed house with his dog, a frolicking German shepherd named Esie, which is Ghanaian for termite.

Tobin's latest adventure began last year with a mountain of paperwork. He estimates 500 documents were filled out, the better to stop customs authori-

ties from quarantining rubber-mold sprayers as flame throwers. From his many expeditions abroad he's accustomed to "unbelievable" bureaucracy. What he didn't expect is that mislaid papers would cause Sarpang to miss his flight to Ghana.

Sarpang's one-week absence caused few labor problems. Residents of Nsawam, a village about an hour's drive from Accra, flocked to work with Tobin, a rare white man who sprayed green rubber on hills they use for burning weeds or picking mushrooms to sell.

The work force zoomed as word spread that Tobin was paying a daily wage up to 20 times higher than the maximum salary of 50 cents. Youngsters skipped school to help or hang out. "It was so much fun," says Sarpang, "that everybody wanted to jump in."

To keep workers happy, Tobin purchased trays of ice-cream cones.

To keep farmers happy, he purchased crops. For his efforts he was often greeted by a snake-like hiss, followed by "Esie!"—an attention-getting salute to the Termite Man.

Another role was art teacher. Asked why he treated termite hills so seriously, Tobin would say he was borrowing the shapes as a form of medicine, like the makers of African icons. He felt he was preserving, and modernizing, nature's primal force. But nothing, not all the ice cream in the world, could have prepared him for the vagaries of African climate.

Temperatures hovering around 100 degrees made precious water particularly valuable. Withering sun gave Tobin heatstroke. Daisuke Shitani, the project's unofficial foreman, had daily diarrhea from dirt particles and a breakfast stew of meat, fish and unknown ingredients.

Brutal heat and lack of electricity caused the rubber-spraying machine to break down. It was fixed by villagers resourceful enough to make a



Steve Tobin (wearing bandanna), directs his workers as they pour molten bronze into a form that will become a part of his bronze termite mound art. photo by Don Fisher.

hammer from a stone. "That was an interesting experience," claims Shitani, a long-time Tobin associate.

"These very simple people fixed the modern machine." Local psychology required finer tuning, Tobin admits. He erred paying \$8 to \$10 a day. Exorbitant wages and the project's magnetism invariably led to money for little or no work. Villagers fought for the right to participate, and for rubber-carrying buckets perfect for hauling water.

A daily council was formed to hear suggestions or grievances. The last two days, Tobin reduced the labor force to the 10 best workers. Unwittingly, he excluded one tribe. Celebrated for his generosity, Tobin found himself accused of racism.

The most delicate negotiation involved a family patriarch upset by his lack of involvement. He retaliated by attacking a termite-hill scaffold with a machete. The next day, after Sarpang explained the project wasn't commercial or colonial, Tobin sought peace in the elder's hut.

The patriarch agreed after receiving a wrist-watch as a gift. Tobin notes that shutting down the project for the summit was a more important present, because it restored a measure of the elder's authority. A farewell party for 200 didn't completely dissolve the tension. Accepted into Tobin, members of rival tribes danced and drummed with more than a

little competition. Matters could have been far worse. The crew could have been delayed by unhappy termite. Tobin reports seeing only one insect battalion. If they had worked in Ghana's rainy season, the towers might have shrunk to huts. Proper letters of transit stopped two brigades of customs officers from opening cases shut by 30 straining volunteers. Opening them improperly would have triggered a Jack-in-the-Box explosion.

The termite-hill project has cost Tobin approximately \$600,000, which he funded by selling exotic glass works and mortgaging his house. While Tobin hasn't sold a termite-hill bronze, he's been repaid spiritually. Workers in Ghana send him letters with postage worth a day's salary. One Nsawam resident, representing colleagues who can't write in English, postscripted: "LONG LIVE STEVE, LONG LIVE BEAUTIFUL HAND WORKS."

Tobin mails thank-you's with \$5 for stamps and sharing the wealth. When he returns to Ghana—he's been invited back in two years—he will distribute the catalog, so laborers can see themselves photographed for the first time.

Tobin's termite-hill bronzes will be displayed through June 20 at the OK Harris Gallery and the Arteindustre Gallery, both in New York City.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service